Itihasa 2

Wakako Mizuki

Itihasa

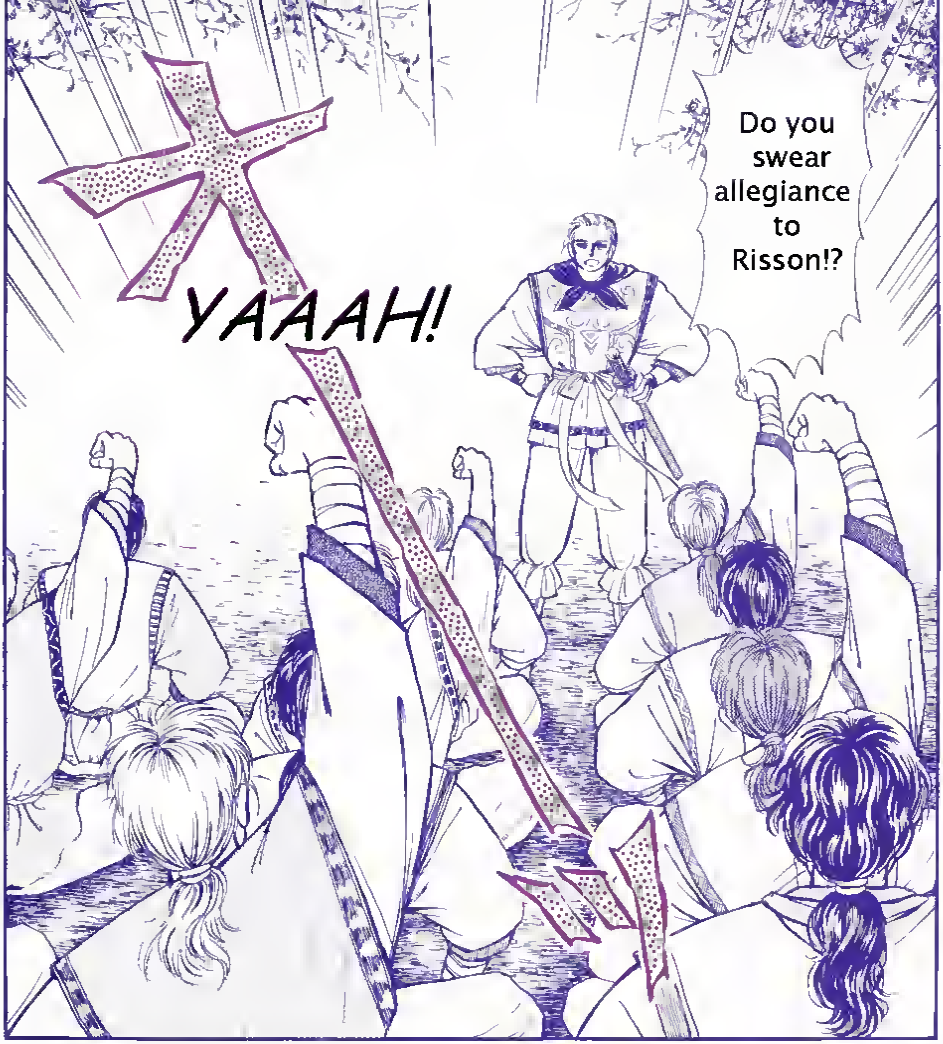
Part I: A Land Bearing the Names of the GodsVol. 2

Itihasa

イティハーサ

第壱部 神名を持つ國

Part I: A Land Bearing the Names of the Gods



Characters and Recap

As foretold by an oracle two generations ago, the gods that can be seen-divided into the warring factions of demigods and demon gods-arrived to this once peaceful island, and kind-hearted tribes worshipped to the gods that cannot be seen, have become embroiled in their war. Toko's tribe was attacked by the Kiyu Faction, a group of demon gods under Kiyu the Silver Horned God. The children were kidnapped and everyone else is brutally murdered.

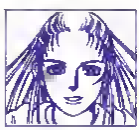
"Afterward, Toko, Takaya and Aohiko run into the Risson Faction, a demigod group under Risson, God of the True Law, which is pursuing the demon gods. When they meet with Risson, Toko is affected by her aura and has a frightening hallucination in which she is kidnapped by the demon gods. Takaya reassures Toko that he will protect her "no matter what." He vows to become stronger than anyone else and defeat the demon gods with the sacred sword handed down in his tribe (along with a bead necklace and mirror). Meanwhile, Katsura and the rest of the demigod army gather together by order of the chief."

"Aohiko
A man Takaya and Toko look up to as an older brother and teacher"

"Takaya an energetic boy who has raised Toko as his sister"

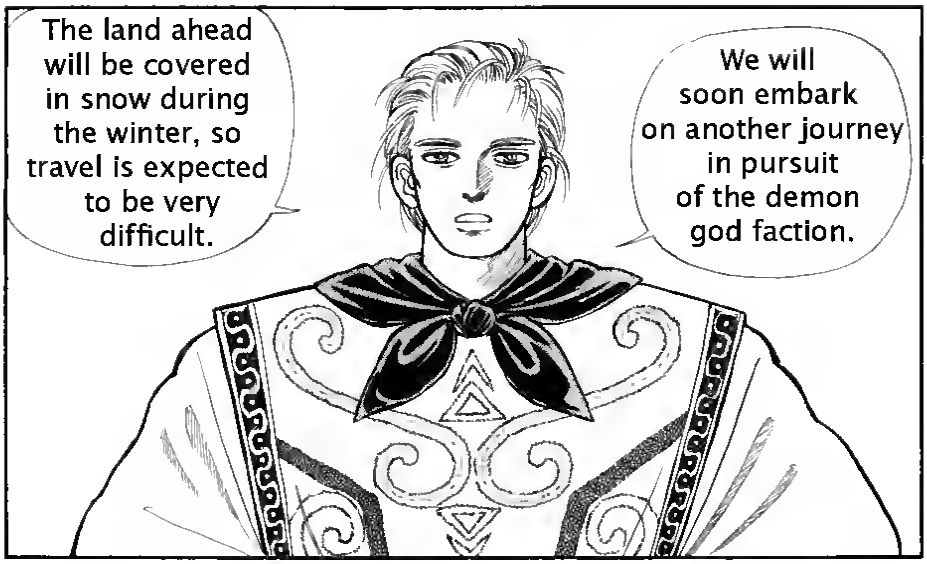
"Toko, a girl found in the river by Takaya when she was a baby and raised by him"

"Ichirota
A warrior who serves Risson"

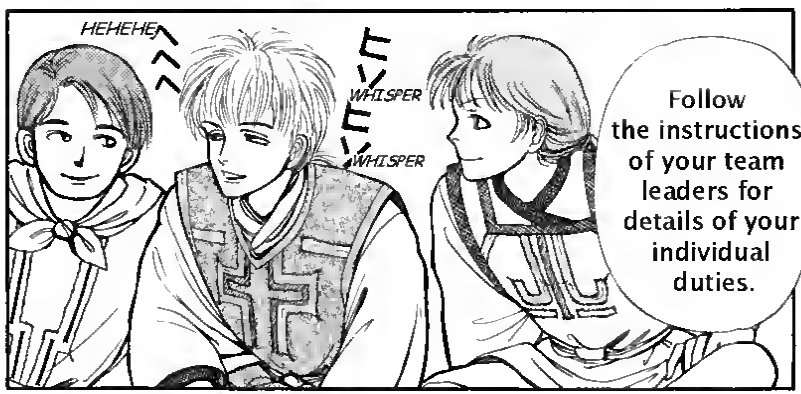


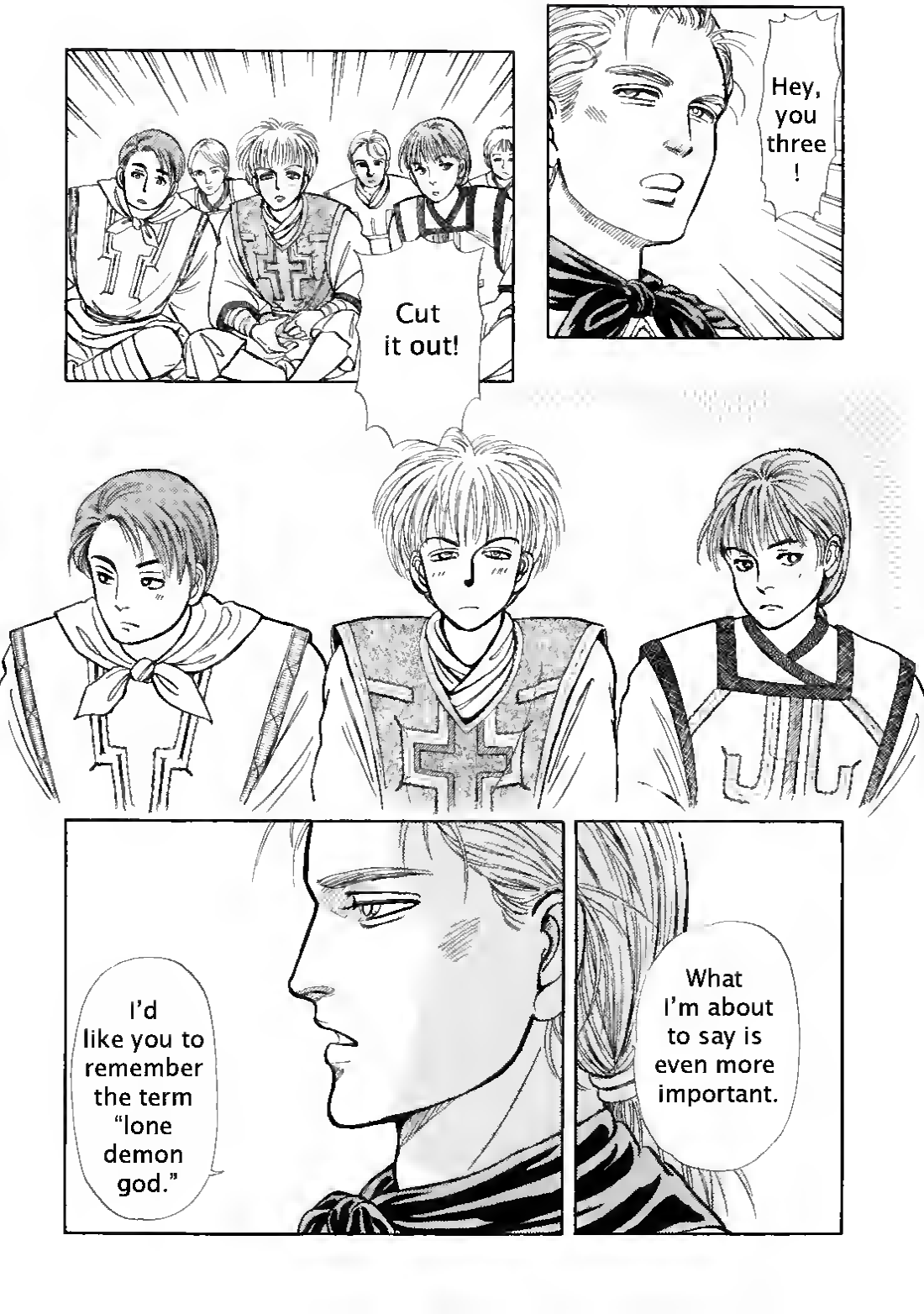
"Katsura
A warrior who serves Risson"

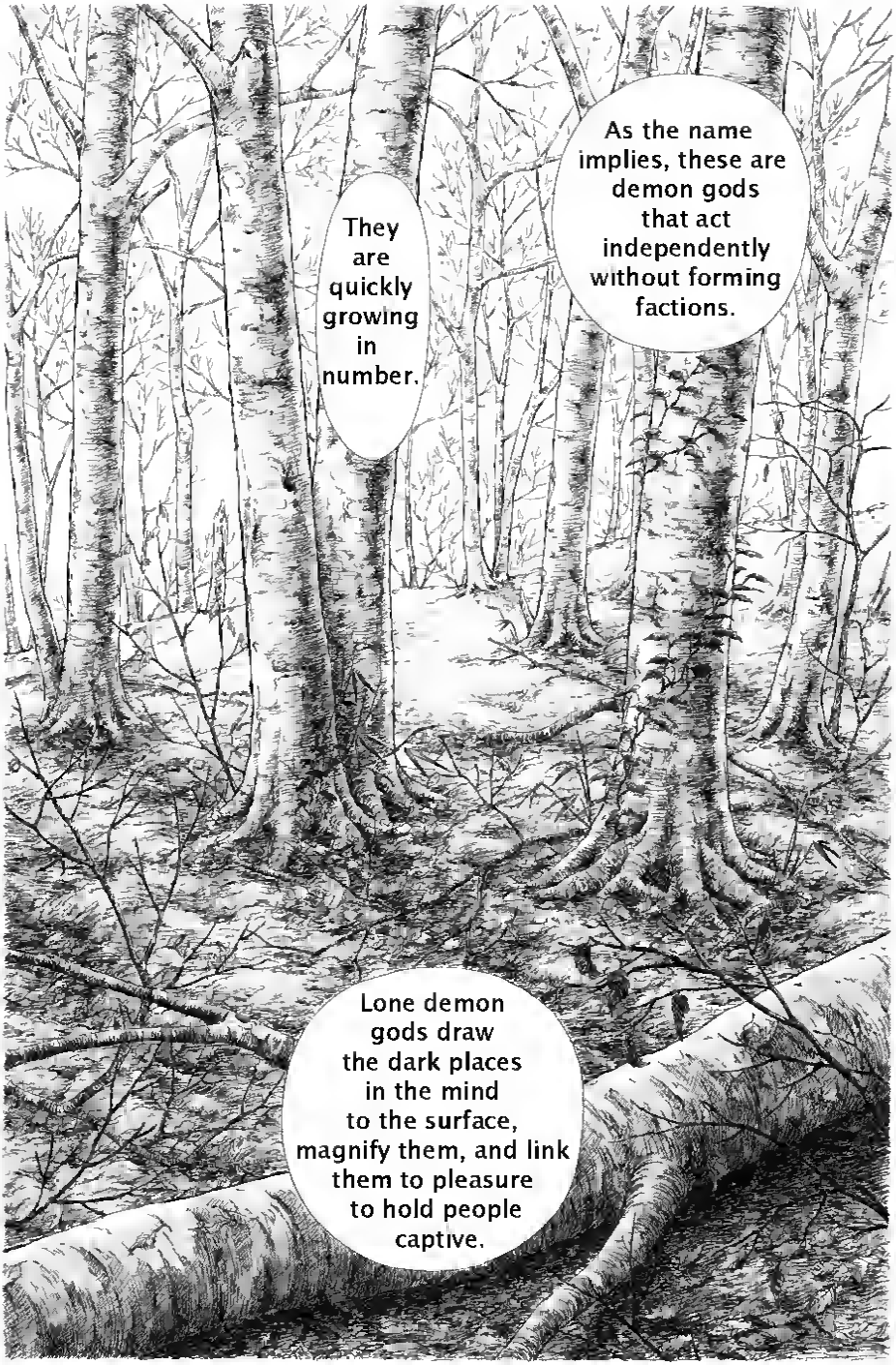
"Risson, God of the True Law
A demigod from foreign lands"

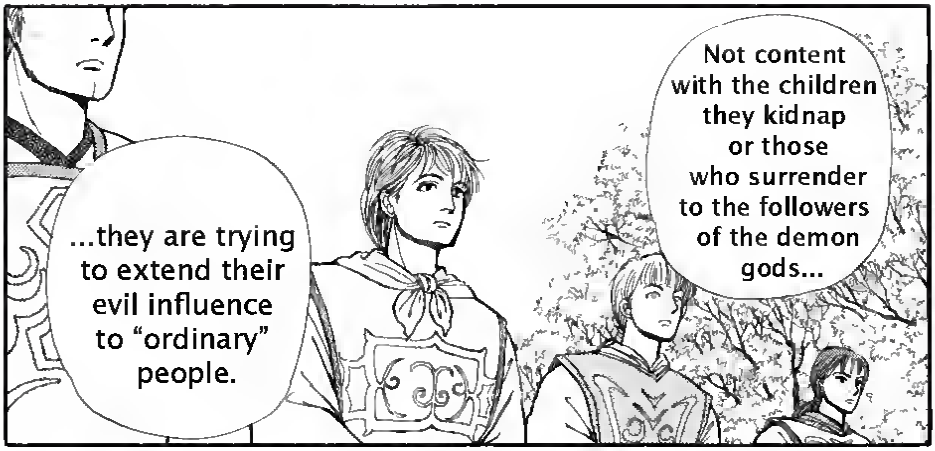

The land ahead will be covered in snow during the winter, so travel is expected to be very difficult.
We will soon embark on another journey in pursuit of the demon god faction.

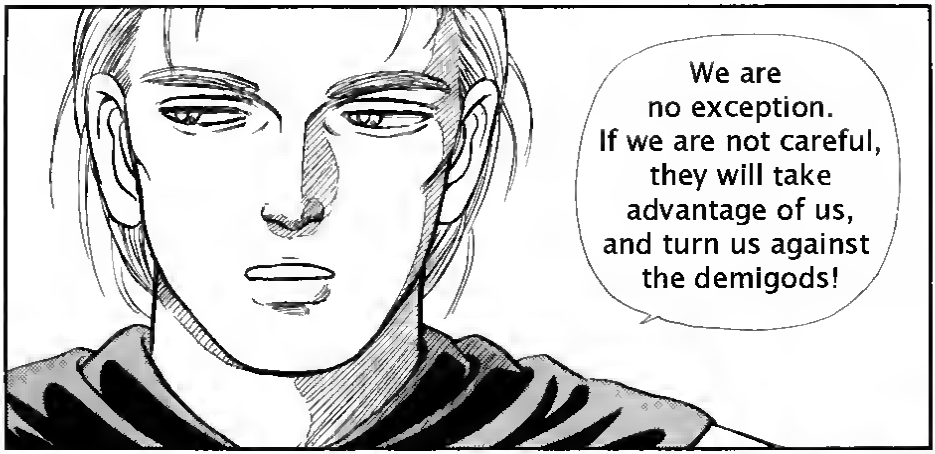
...and decide whether to head out or stay for the winter after assessing the weather.
We will stock up on food, clothing, and weapons here...

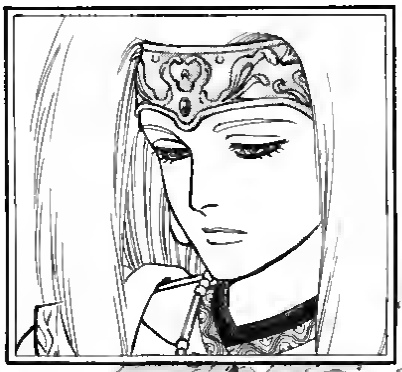

HEHEHE
WHISPER
WHISPER
Follow the instructions of your team leaders for details of your individual duties.


Hey, you three!
Cut it out!
I'd like you to remember the term "lone demon god."
What I'm about to say is even more important.

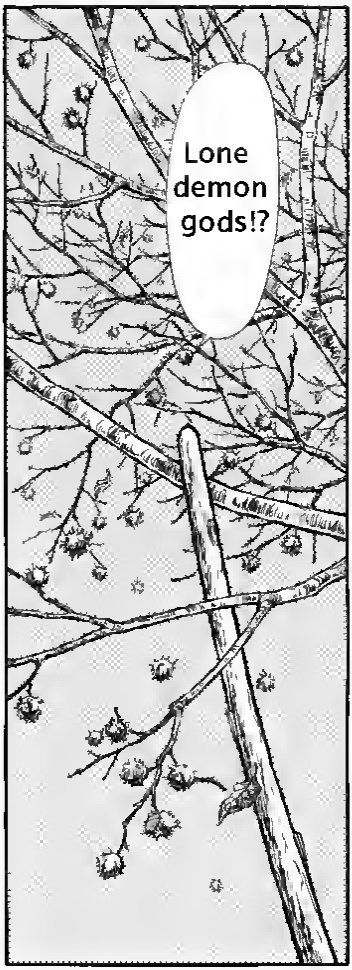

As the name implies, these are demon gods that act independently without forming factions.
They are quickly growing in number.
Lone demon gods draw the dark places in the mind to the surface, magnify them, and link them to pleasure to hold people captive.


Not content with the children they kidnap or those who surrender to the followers of the demon gods...
...they are trying to extend their evil influence to "ordinary" people.


We are no exception. If we are not careful, they will take advantage of us, and turn us against the demigods!


Those who doubt themselves need not fear-stay within the shield formed by Risson's aura.
He will protect you.

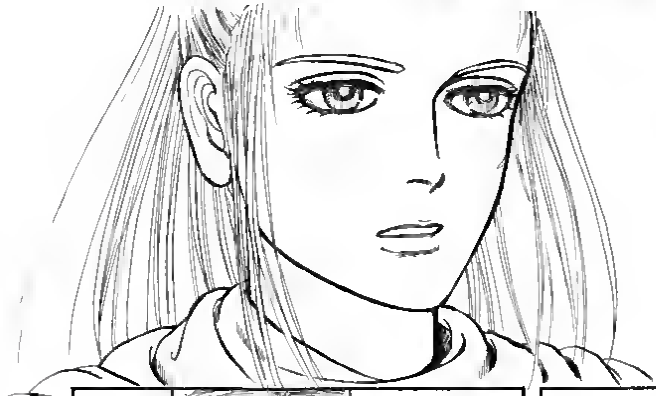
It seems countless numbers of them are traveling here from foreign lands.


Lone demon gods!?

...

How do you bring down a demon god?
Demon gods are immortal.

They don't even eat.
They do not age or get sick.
As are the demigods.

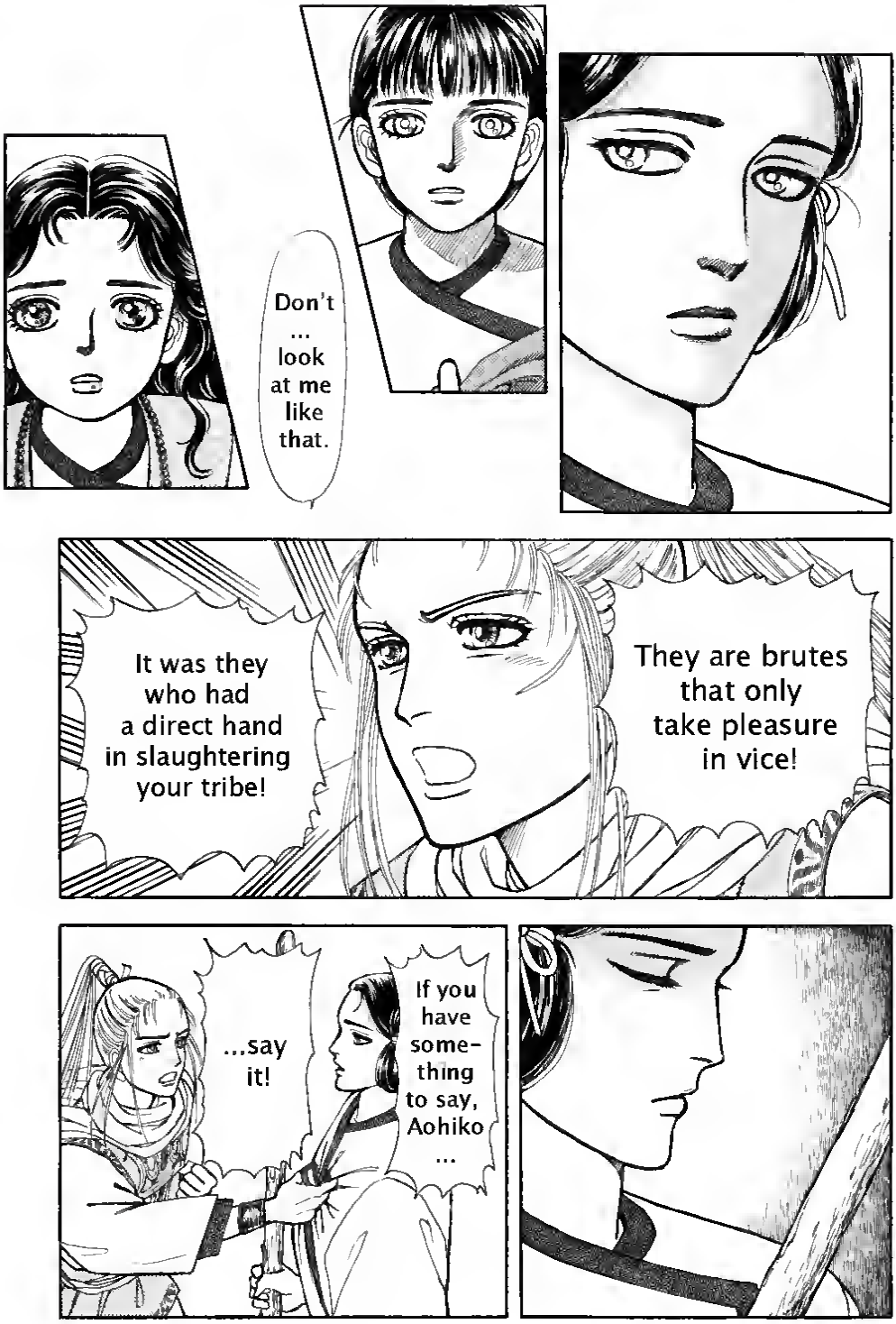

That's why they are gods...

We fight their followers.
Only the demigods can fight against the demon gods.

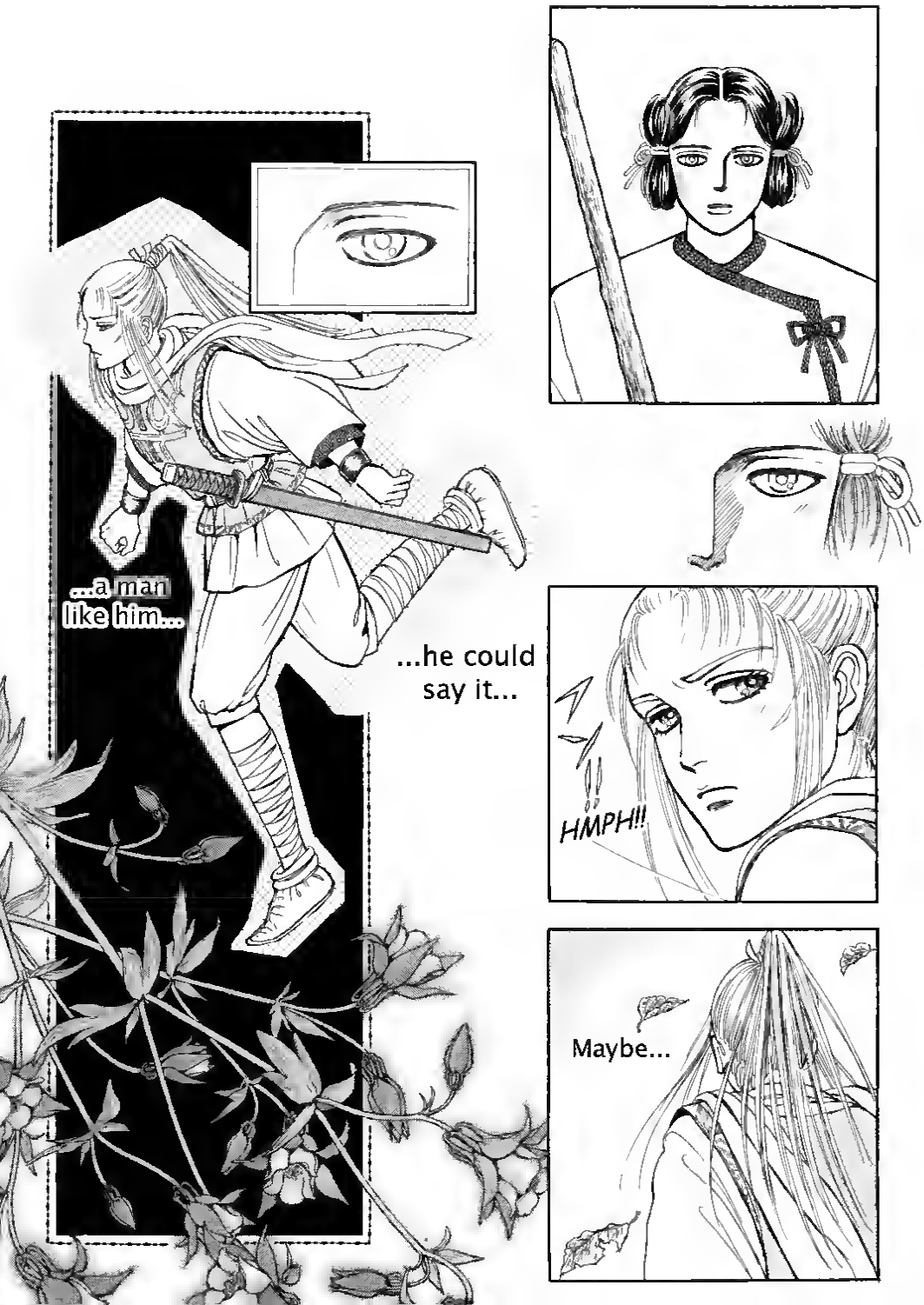
So how do you fight them?
Who do you fight against, Katsura?

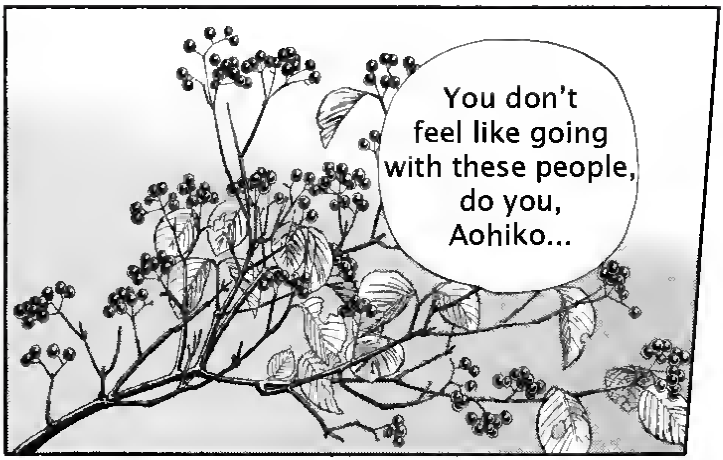
POWER
POWER
POWER
I want to fight the demon gods!
So... gods against gods...
...and humans against humans ...
An... ant?
Ooh. That's small.
Don't be stupid! You're like an ant to them.
If you go with us, Risson will protect you.
And if the demon gods are after the knowledge of the gods that cannot be seen, that makes you sitting ducks.

With you ...
...on a road paved in blood and carnage ...!?
Do you have a better plan to protect yourself!?
Are you powerful enough to protect these two?
The followers of the demon gods are no longer human.
They're an exten-sion of the demon gods!
If you think about it that way, you can kill them without hesitation!

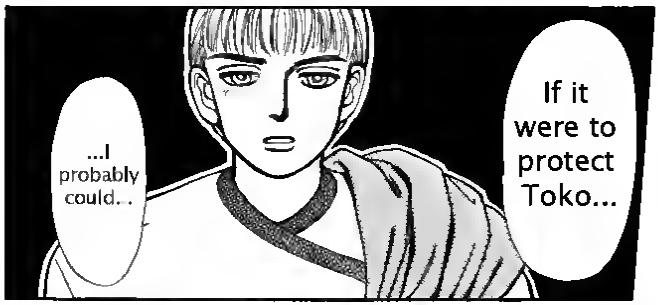

Don't ... look at me like that.
It was they who had a direct hand in slaughtering your tribe!
They are brutes that only take pleasure in vice!
If you have some-thing to say, Aohiko ...
...say it!

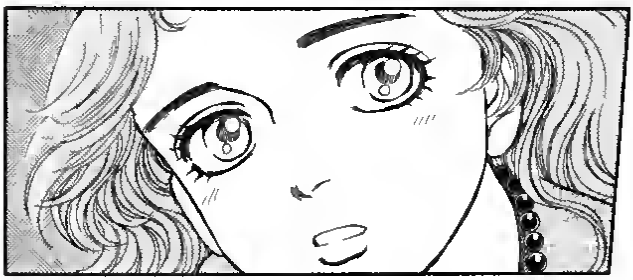
I... pity you ...
SLAP
Hypocrite!
Will you be able to say that when an arrow is sticking out of your back?
Or they torture Takaya and Toko to death!?


...a man like him...
...he could say it...
!!
HMPH!!
Maybe...


You don't feel like going with these people, do you, Aohiko...

Can you? With your own hands?
I can't kill people.


...I probably could..
If it were to protect Toko...

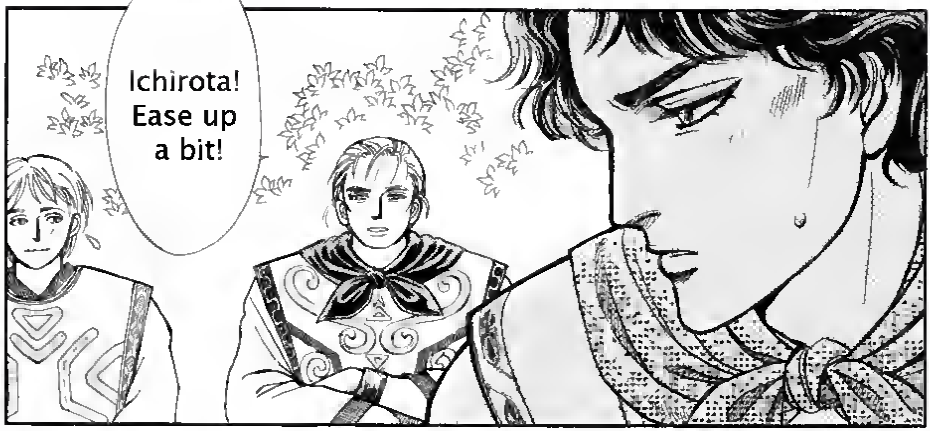


What a fool!

He can die for all I care.

I want to become strong!
Strong enough to protect Toko.
...want to go with them, don't you?
Takaya, you ...
The gods that cannot be seen must have given us the sword for that.
We're gonna have to fight, Aohiko!
If we don't fight, we'll be killed!
This is an age when we can't get away with saying "we don't want to fight."
I think there's some truth to what that guy Ichirota said...
If we go with these people, Toko will inevitably become involved in the war.

HIYA!!!
PRICK
..
オーーーッ
OOOOH
ズーン
THUD
Ow-
ww


Ichirota! Ease up a bit!

I've been feeling like I've got pins and needles in my fingers and toes...
Chief!

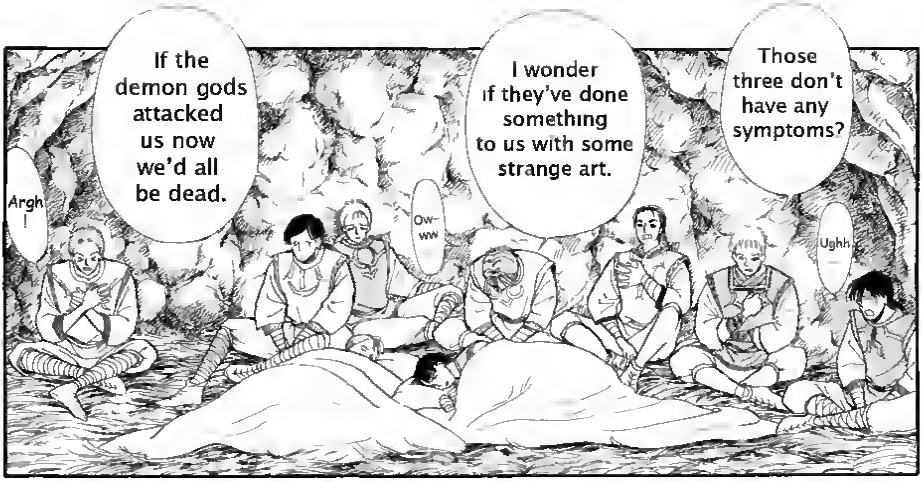
I think I stepped on something sharp.
Sorry...

Me too! I've got it too!
PRICK...
I've also been feeling that way...
You too?

Yes, chief!
Is there anyone else who feels fine?
Ow-ow-ow
I don't feel anything.
I'm feeling some-thing too
Yes sir!
Go check on all the teams!
Oww
What's happened to us!?
Ow-ow-ow...
It's not the work of the demon gods, is it?
Don't be silly! We dug their graves!
Is it a curse? From the tribe...

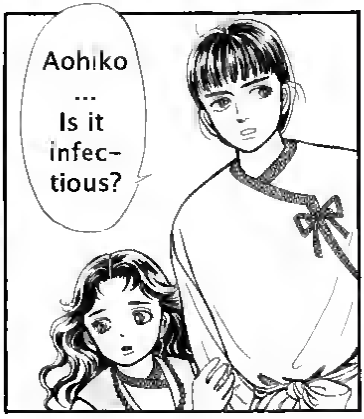
Aohiko! Something is happening!
Everyone's hands and feet are hurting.
Come take a look– it sounds like they're really in pain.
OUCH
OUCH
What is wrong with you men! You're pathetic!
OOF
Be like Katsura! Look at her!
あーっ AHHH
いてて… OWWW
Everyone?

Katsura !
Aohiko!
What's wrong, Katsura !?
I don't know. My hands and feet started feeling prickly a little while ago.
Go see the chief. He wants to talk to you.
Aohiko, right?
I'm Chief Yoshi-kage.
I hear you're knowledge-able about diseases. Could you take a look at them?
Forty-three of us are like this. Only five are symptom-free.


If the demon gods attacked us now we'd all be dead.
Argh
I wonder if they've done something to us with some strange art.
Ow-ww
Those three don't have any symptoms?
Ughh

My fingers and toes feel horrible... Like twigs have been shoved under my nails.

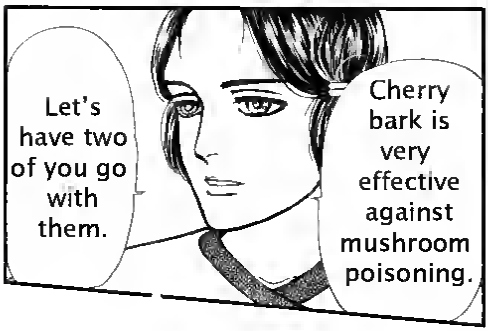
So it's just their hands and feet that hurt ...


Aohiko ... Is it infec-tious?

I wonder it's...

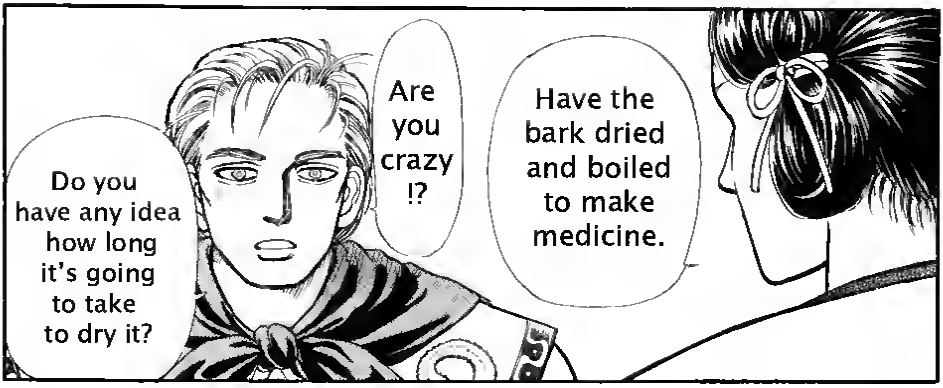
Mush-rooms ?
No, but... Why?
Let me guess. You're not a fan of mush-rooms, right?
Chief !
Katsura! Did you eat some mush-rooms three to four days ago?
Hey, he's saying it's mush-rooms.
Before you got here-pretty dark-brown ones that cave in at the center of the cap.
Yeah!
Do you know what he's talking about?
That's it!
It takes a few days for the symptoms to appear
...
Yeah ... I ate some.
A species of Clitocybe acromelalga

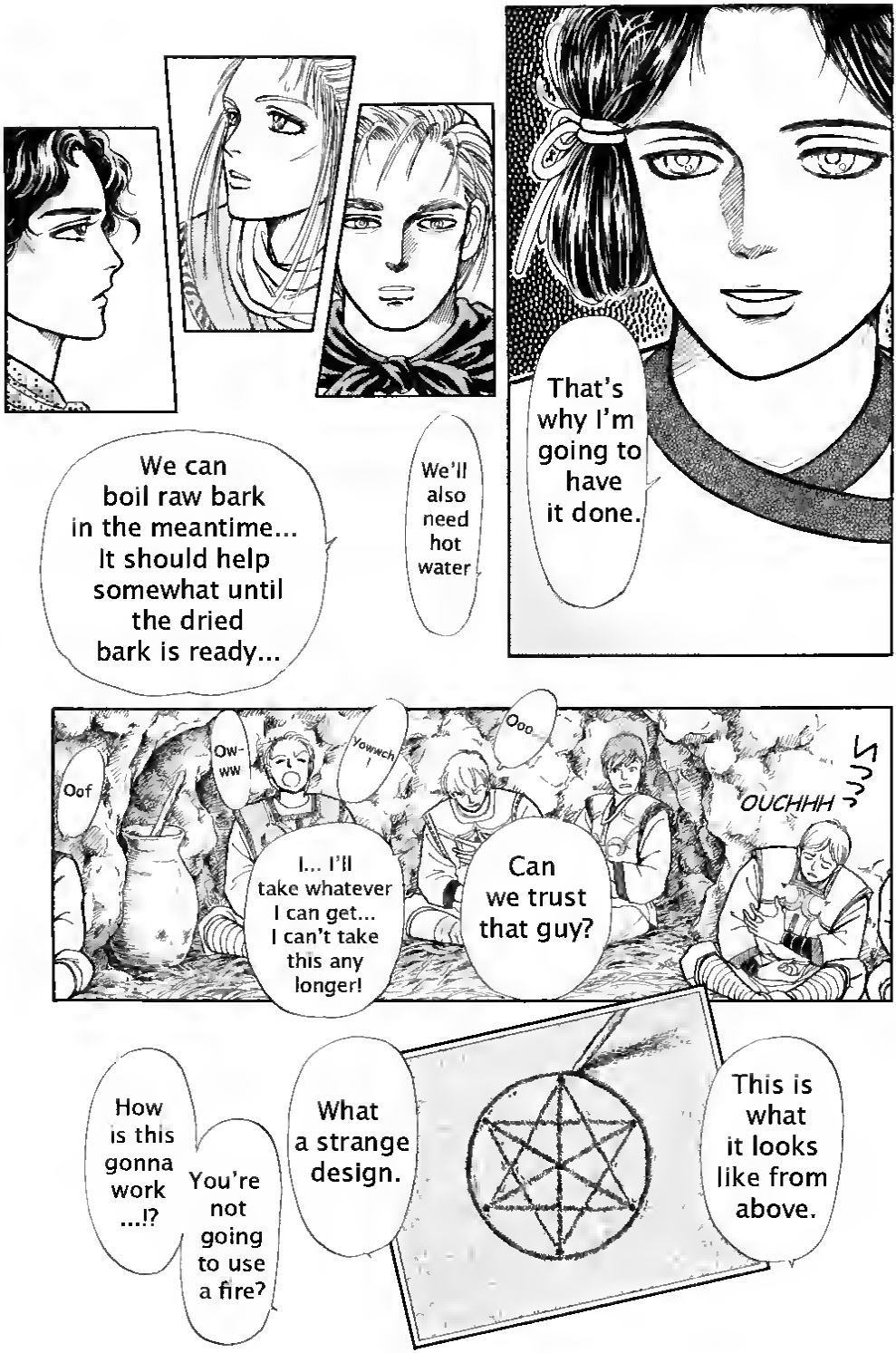
I'm gonna die.
You've gotta be kidding!
A month !?
The pain can last for a month or more depending on the amount eaten...
Huh ...!?
There's a possibility some will become seriously ill or even die.
WHISPER
Could Risson lend us his help?
Risson will protect us from the demon gods, but human illness...
Toko !
Takaya !
Is there anything we can do? Some kind of antidote ...?
...



What are you going to do!?

Then I'll have another two... of the unaffected people help me...



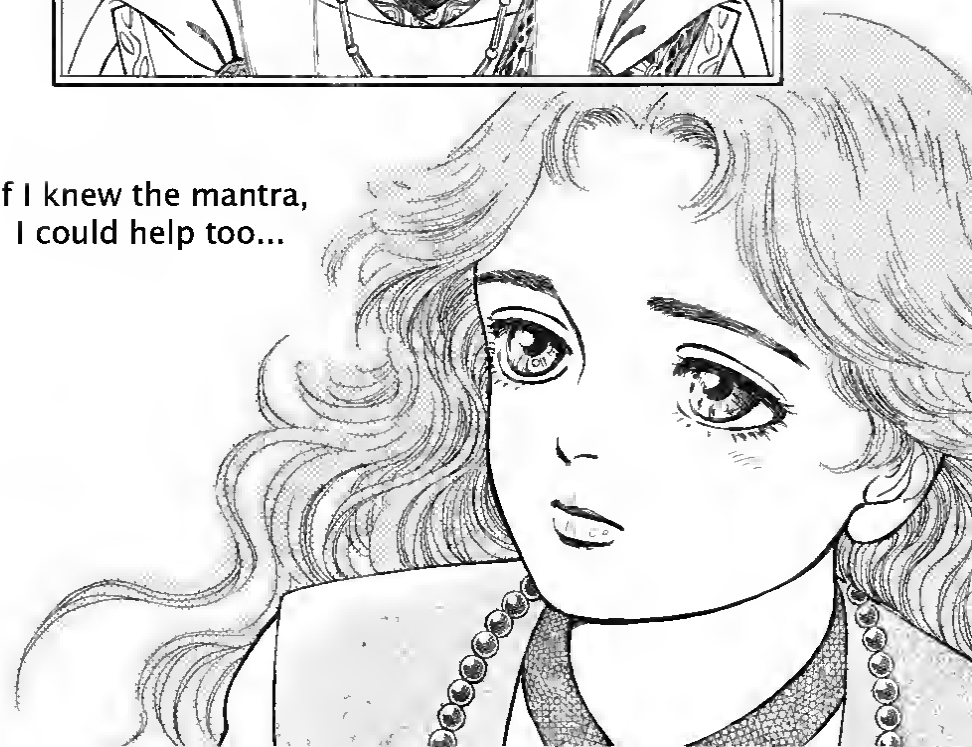

That's why I'm going to have it done.
We'll also need hot water
We can boil raw bark in the meantime... It should help somewhat until the dried bark is ready...
Oof
Ow-ww
Yowwch!
Ooo
OUCHHH
I... I'll take whatever I can get... I can't take this any longer!
Can we trust that guy?
How is this gonna work ...!?
You're not going to use a fire?
What a strange design.
This is what it looks like from above.

Hehe– it's my forte!
Not bad, Toko. You really know your stuff!
Look!
This way! Over here!
Even if we turn this into medicine, it's only going to be effective for mild cases...
I don't want to hurt them.
Don't take too much from a single tree.
Hurry !
It's almost sun– down.
...not to mention our lack of a yang stone and the chanting of our tribe. How can we cure them?
SCRAPE SCRAPE
Aohiko doesn't have the power of an oracle...

If we at least had a yang stone, we could...
If we had a yang stone...
That's it...!
Oh...

AUGH
Yow-ww
PANT PANT PANT
OUCH
It'll just be a bunch of pebbles once they're all cured.
...
Aohiko's going to use the power of that bead necklace, isn't he?
...but he's still going ahead with it.
It takes a great deal of power to cure illness...
I'll do my best!
Yes!
You remember the mantra, right!?
Okay, Takaya! Start with the bark!
All right!
Ask Risson to make those in intense pain fall asleep.

Don't catch cold!
Toko, go ahead and sleep!
Lucky...


If I knew the mantra, I could help too...

ヤロトヘタア
ヤロトヘタア
ヤロトヘタア
ヤロトヘタア

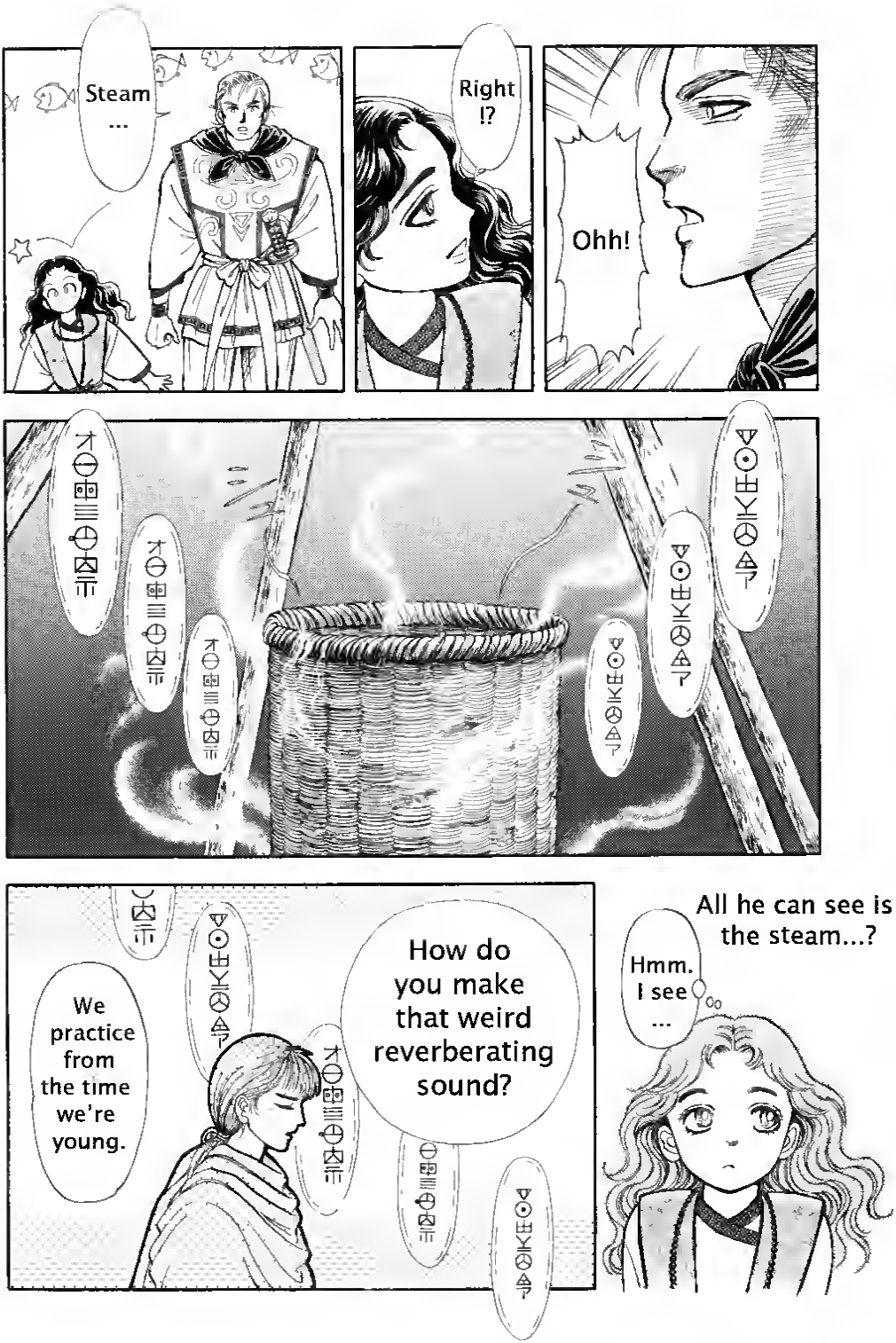
ムゼの国王
オロ国王の妃
ムゼの王子
ムゼの国王
……天井うた

光の中の女
光の中の女
人影の女
光の中の女
光の中の女

Oh!

Chief !
The ones who have it worst are falling asleep.
Hey !
It's pretty!
Like fireflies ...
Risson is using clairvoyance to perceive their condition and sending out his power.
You can't?
Can you see it?

N-no ...
Hmm.
I've heard the peoples of the gods that cannot be seen are good at perceiving invisible things ...
See? Over there!


Steam ...
Right !?
Ohh!
All he can see is the steam...?
Hmm. I see ...
How do you make that weird reverberating sound?
We practice from the time we're young.

From the age of seven.
I'm seven...
If I don't start learning now, I won't be able to do the mantras.
Pass on... their wis...dom...
...first to Toko...
...first to Toko...
...Takaya didn't tell Aohiko...
Even though the Oracle said that...

I don't believe it... Raw bark dried in just half a night...
Right !
Quickly boil it and have everyone drink the broth.
STAGGER
Idiot, I've told you to go to bed!
He he.
Toko! You're still up!?

I'm fine!
Go rest for a bit!
Mantras sap your physical strength when recited at night.
Taka-ya!
Aohiko !
Right now !?
Carry the sick here, starting with the most serious cases
This is mortifying!
Argh ...
It's no use talking to him at times like these.
Do as I said! I'll have you help again once you've recovered.

And on top of it all, my voice is going hoarse!
My head is throbbing, and I feel dizzy!
I said I'm fine!
Takaya ...
Are you okay!?
But you're not!
You always say the opposite of what you mean!

WHUMP
I lashed out at little Toko...
I'm so terrible.
... for yelling at you ...
Sorry ...
Okay !?
Hey ...
Today, I'll sing you a lullaby!

Ha-yo ne-yo-ne

Ha-yo ne-yo-ne

You can't fall asleep
with laughter or tears

What can you see
when you
close your eyes?

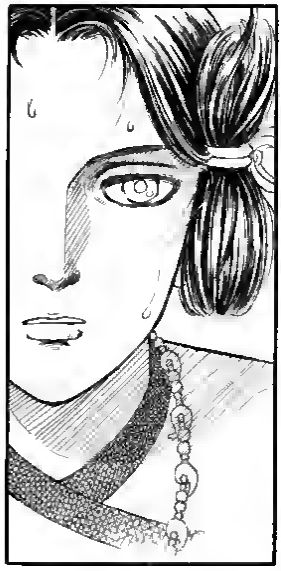
Ha-yo ne-yo-ne

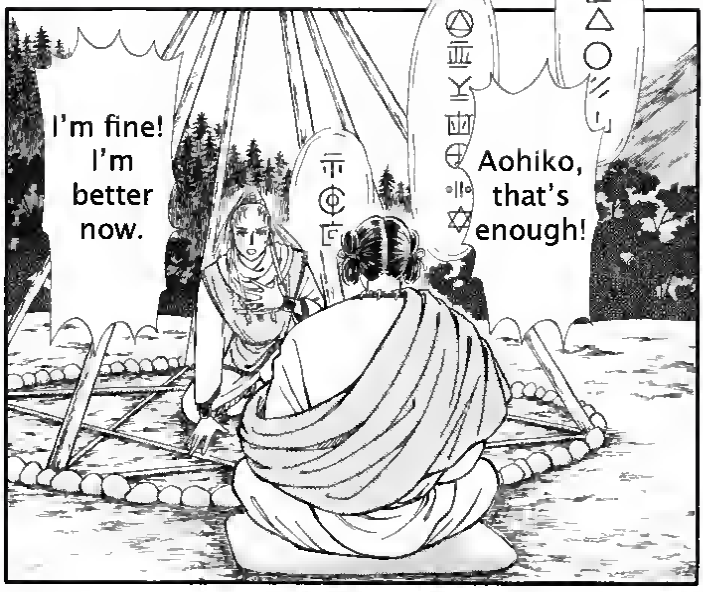
Ha-yo ne-yo-ne

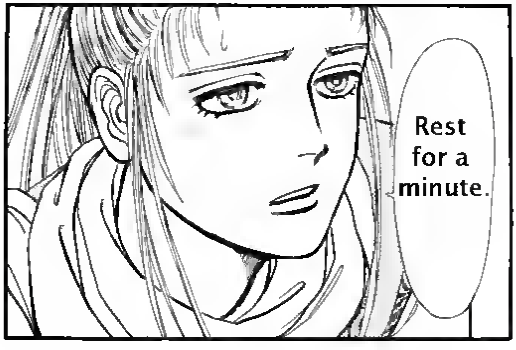
"The red flowers of a faraway land
The white waves of an ocean you
have never seen"

We'll meet again
in the land of dreams...

...how his voice gradually sinks into your body and relieves all the pain.
It's amazing
That guy's got stamina. Tonight will be the third night he's been doing this.
There's no way he can last.
There are... 15 serious cases left.
The kid's just been resting on and off...
Yep ...



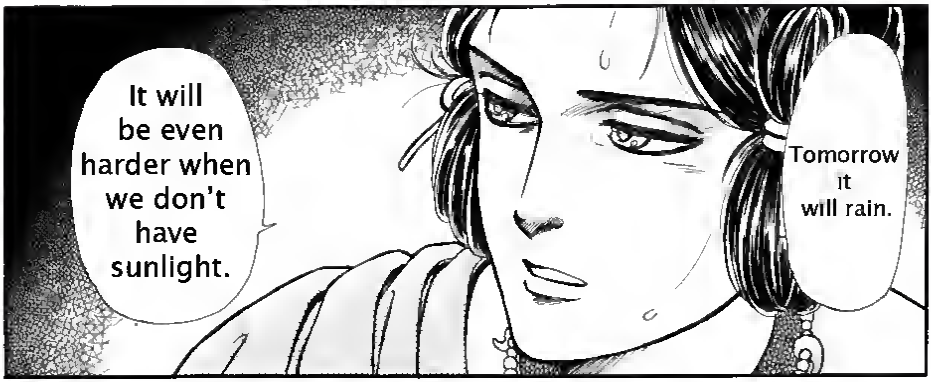




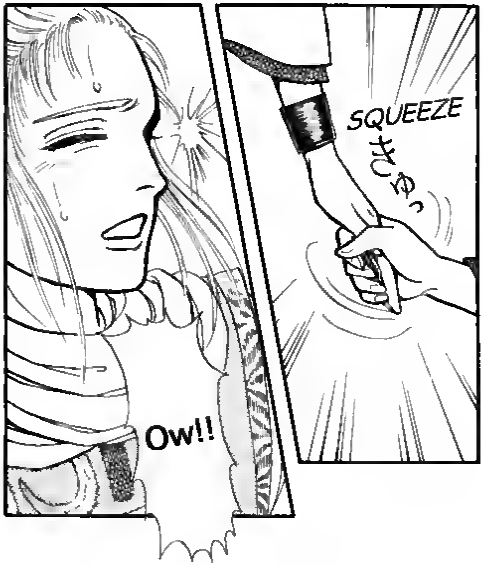
The direction of the wind has changed, and the air is getting damper.

The sparrow's call and movement have slowed down since morning...

The call of the brambling has changed


It will be even harder when we don't have sunlight.
Tomorrow it will rain.

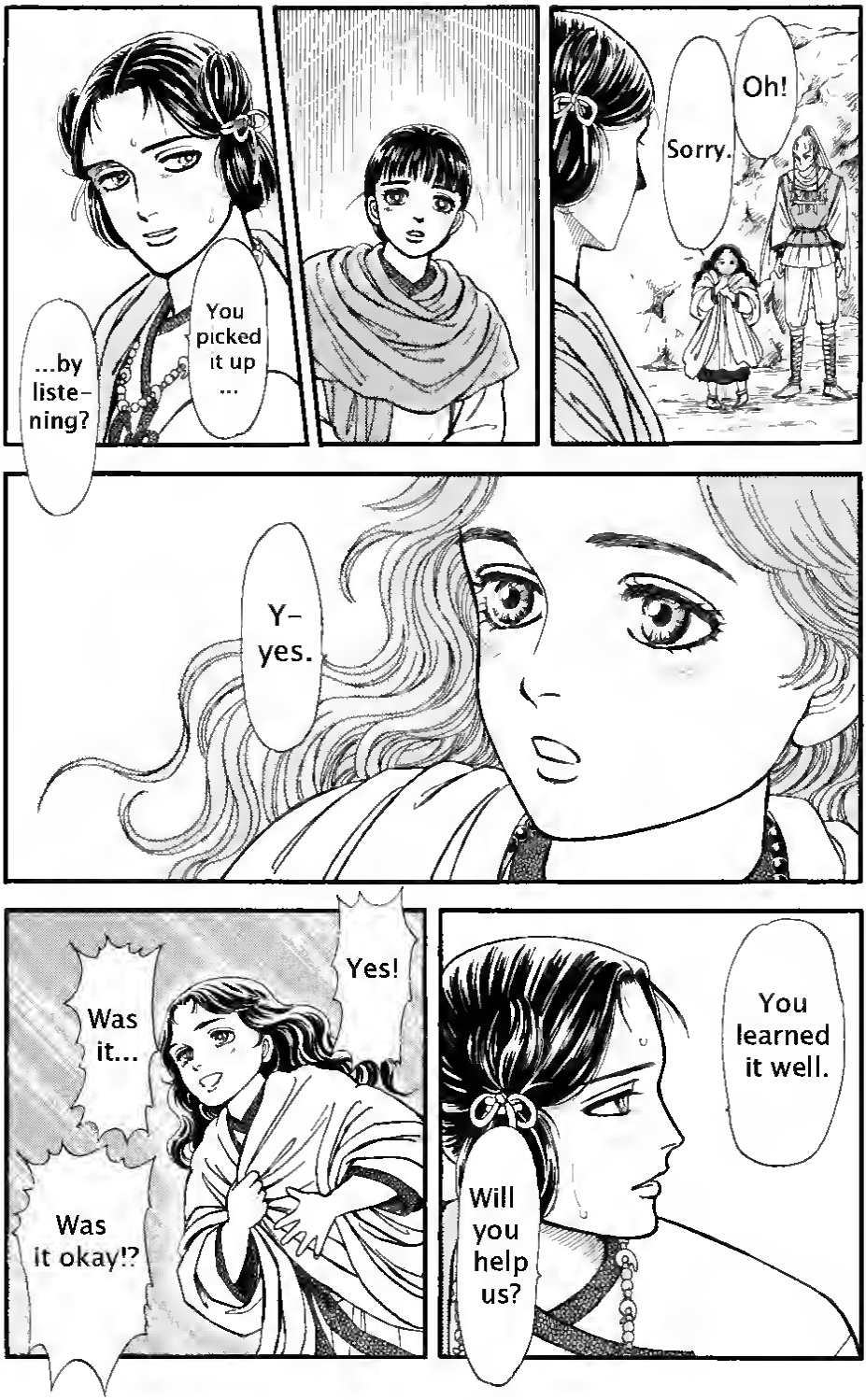
Okay! This is the last night. I'm gonna keep you up late.
Aohiko
I'm feeling better now!
Aohiko

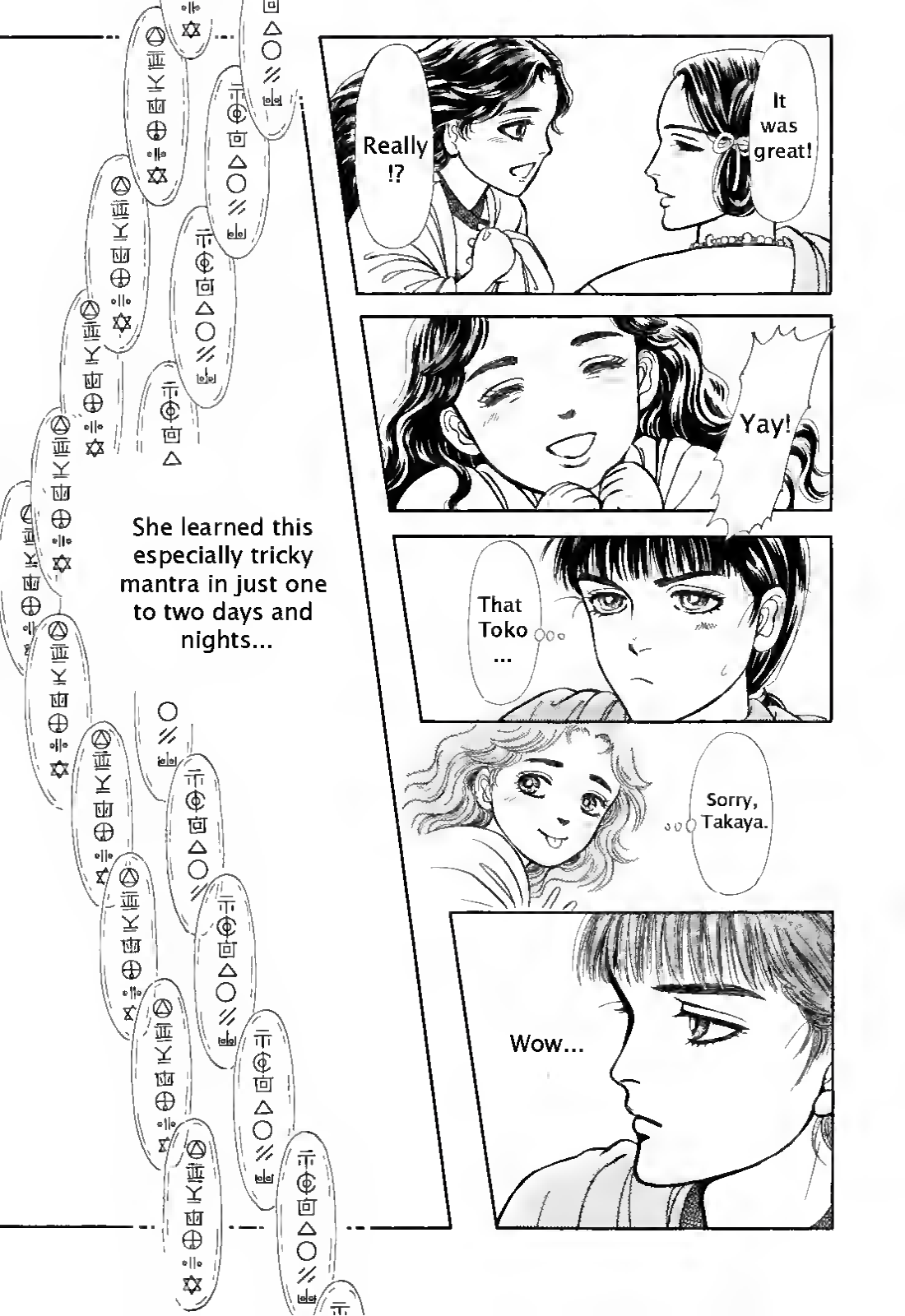

SQUEEZE
ぎゅっ
Ow!!

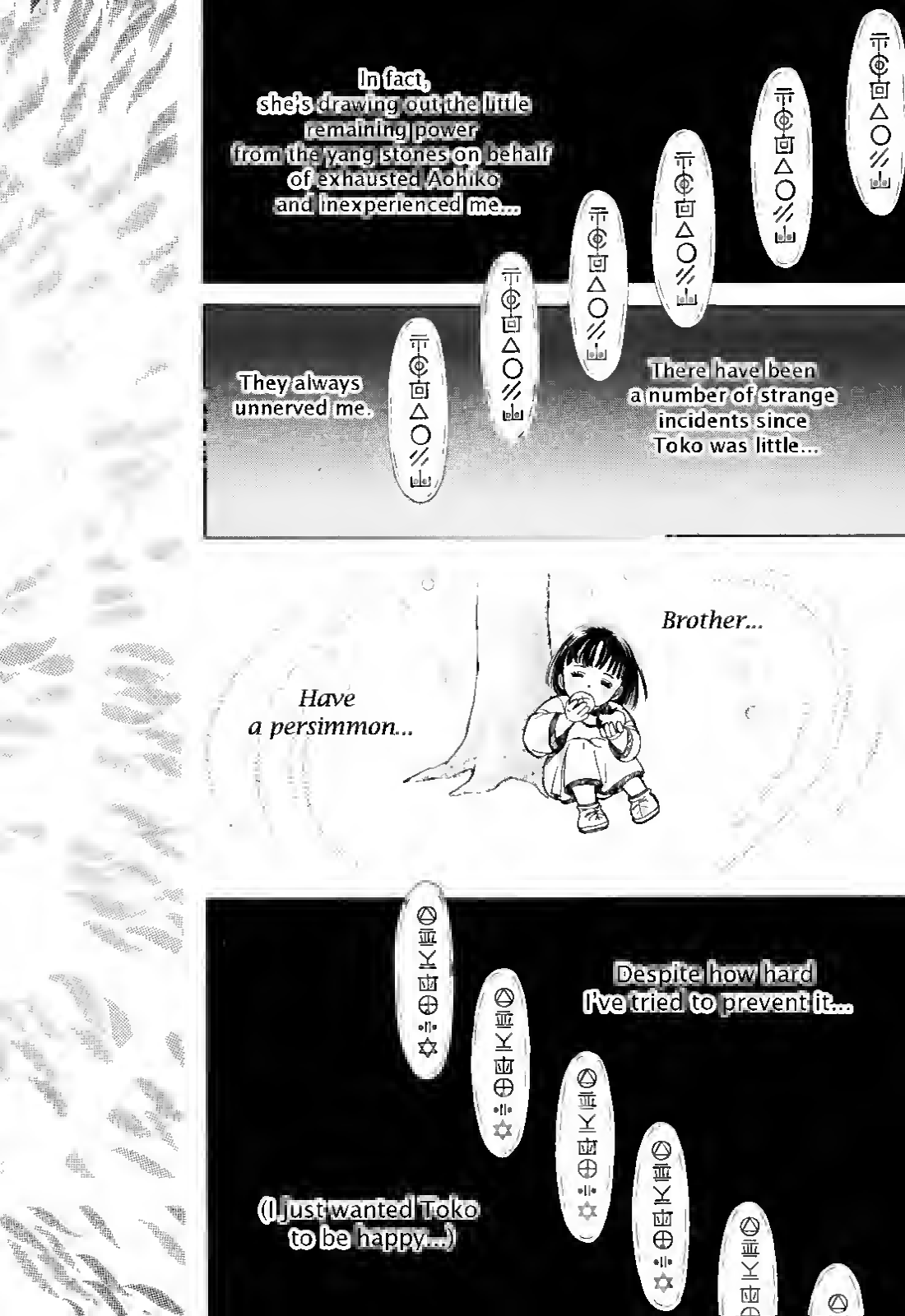
Katsura

Sit down.
I can tolerate this much.
Sit!
THUD
ストン
That's the first man who's talked to her like that...
... isn't it? Ichi-rota!

I...
I...
Both Aohiko and Takaya are worn out.
The power of the yang stones is starting to fade.

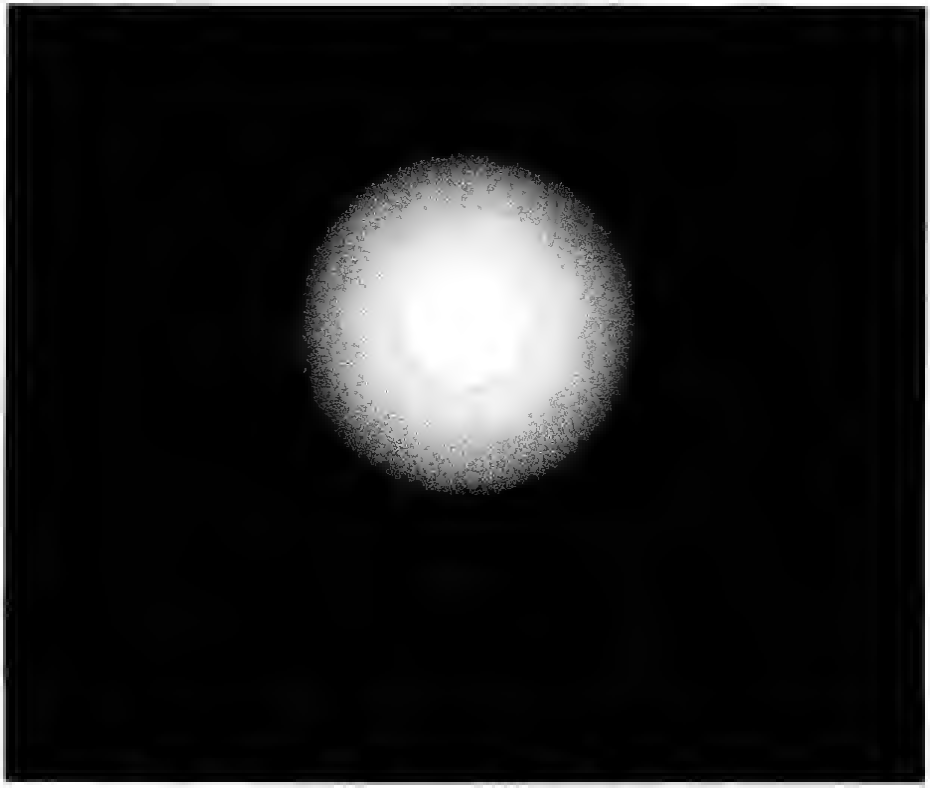

...by listening?
You picked it up ...
Oh!
Sorry.
Y-yes.
Was it...
Was it okay!?
Yes!
Will you help us?
You learned it well.


Really !?
It was great!
Yay!
That Toko ...
Sorry, Takaya.
Wow...
She learned this especially tricky mantra in just one to two days and nights...

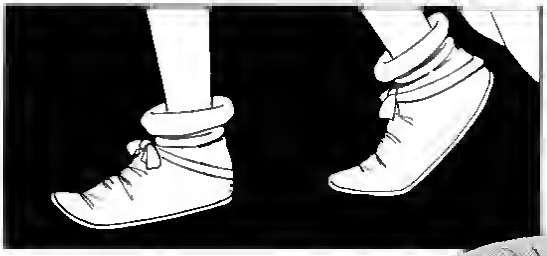

In fact,
she's drawing out the little remaining power from the yang stones on behalf of exhausted Aohiko and inexperienced me...
They always unnerved me.
There have been a number of strange incidents since Toko was little...
Have a persimmon...
Brother...
Despite how hard I've tried to prevent it...
(I just wanted Toko to be happy...)

...it may be her fate
to inherit the wisdom
of the gods that cannot
be seen.

What they really need is sleep.
Here! Eat this!
Thank you so much!
That was no small feat!
Well done!
CHEER
CHEER
CHEER
CHEER



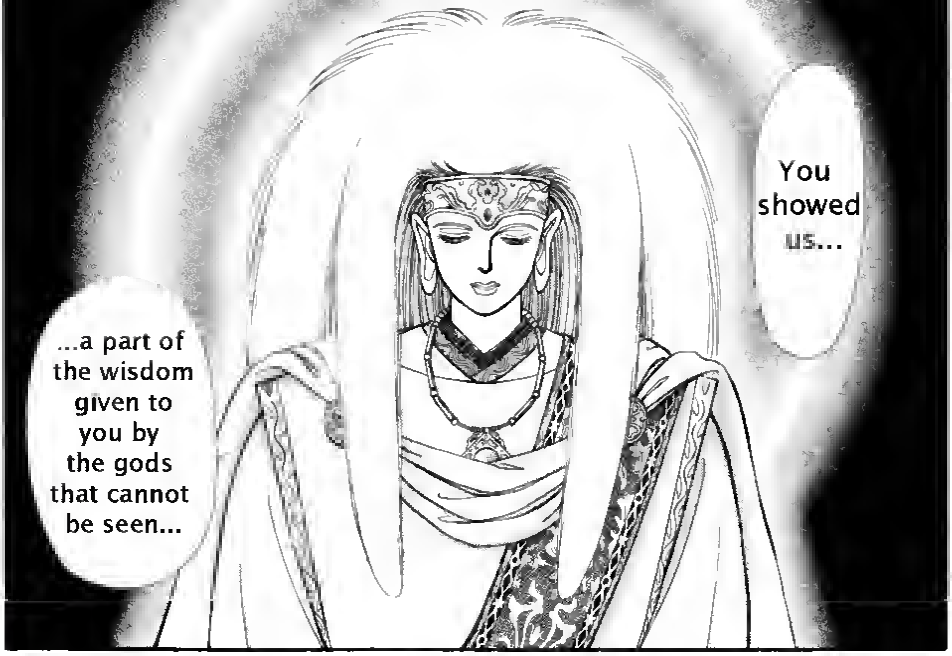
A firefly?
At this time
of year?

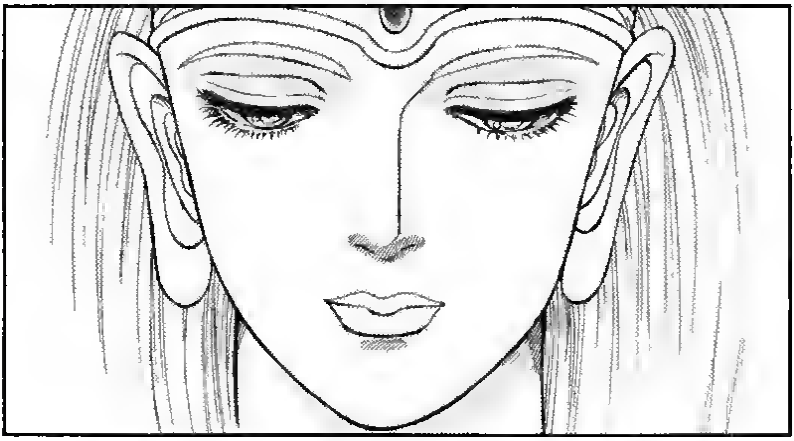


What's that...?

Where am I...!?
I...
How did I get here...
...I could have sworn I was resting in the Tosai Caves.
Aohiko ...

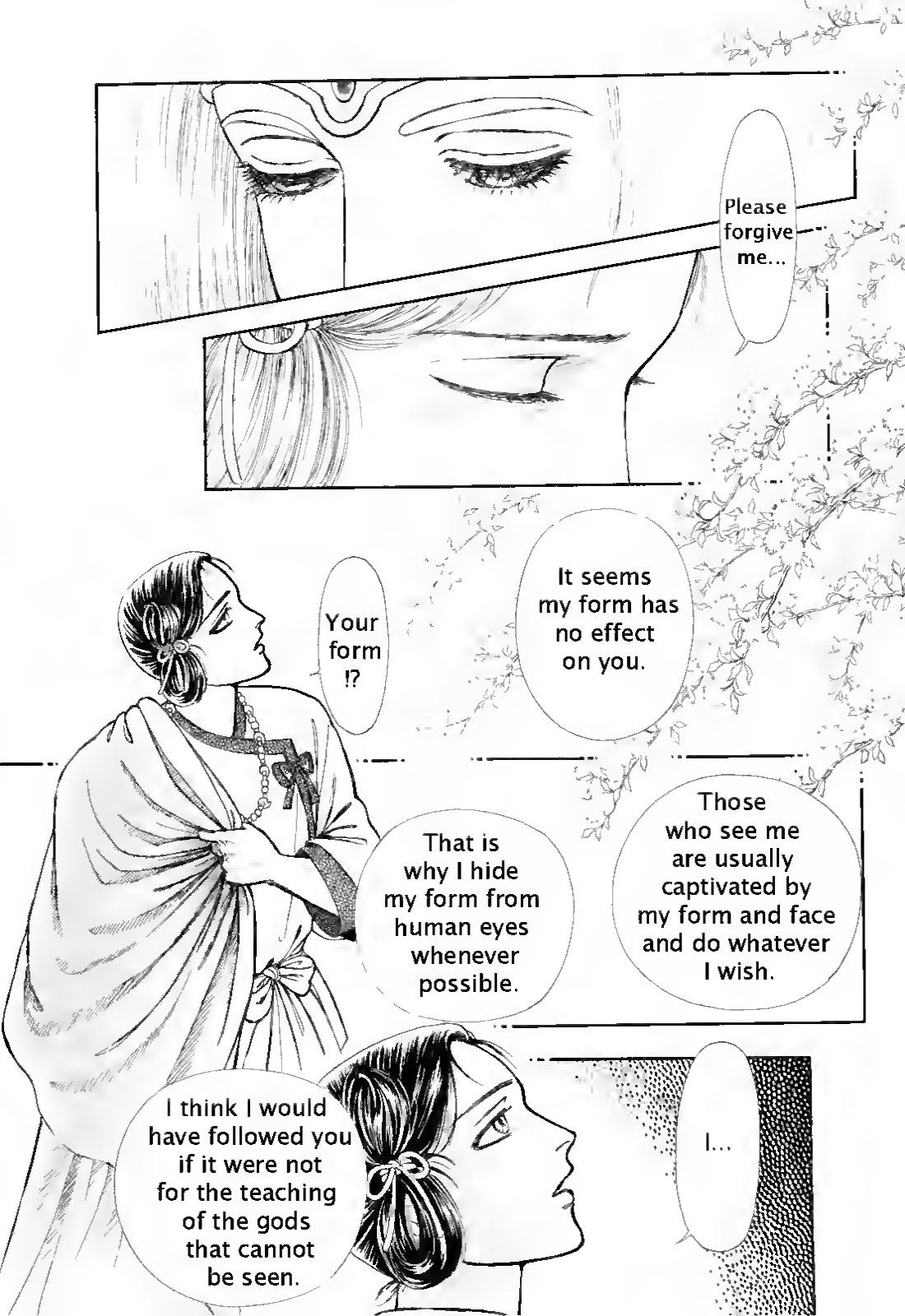
Your Holi-ness!?
Did you...
...call me?
Yes, I did...

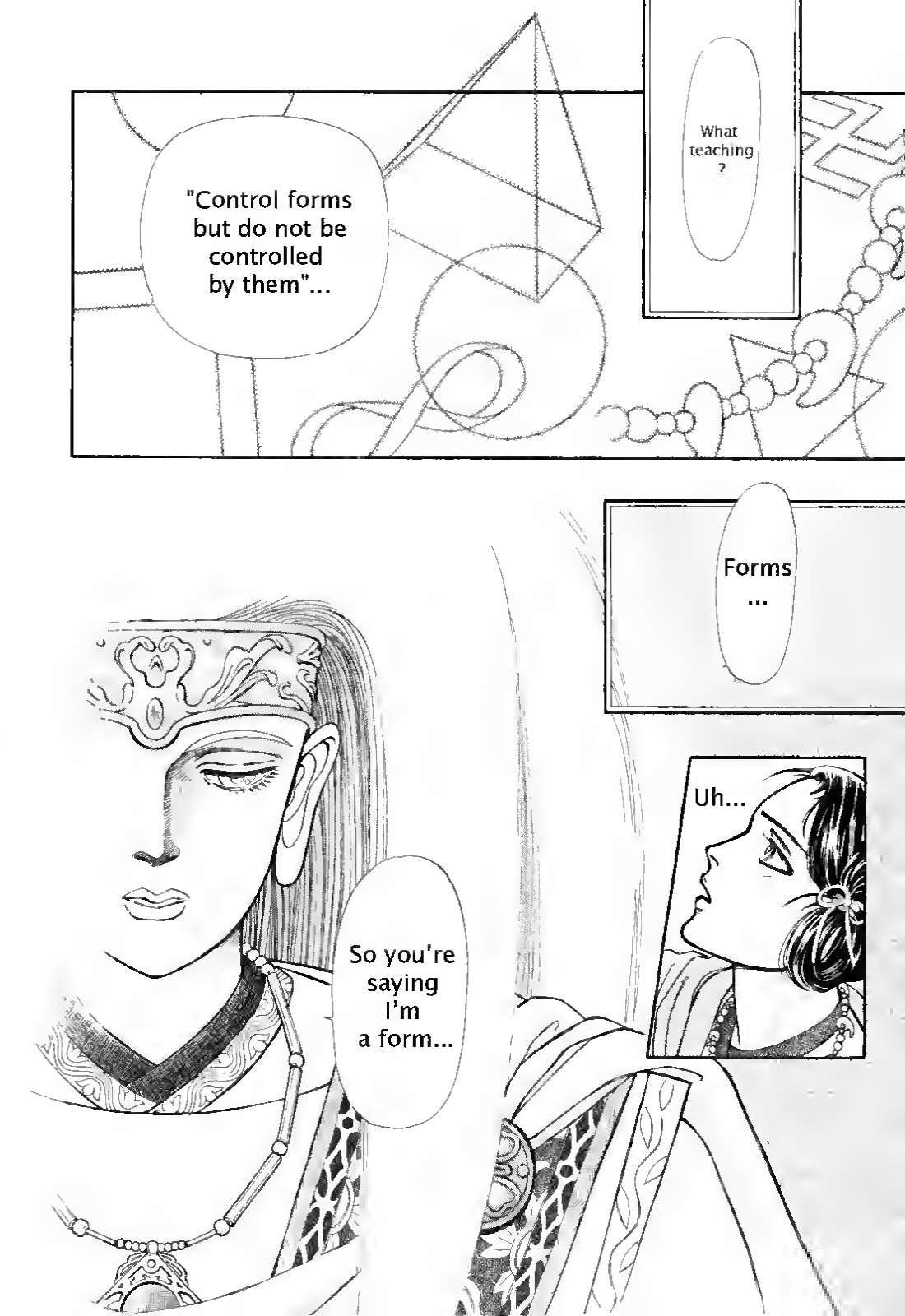

You showed us...
...a part of the wisdom given to you by the gods that cannot be seen...



I want you...
...you and those children ...

Come with us.
...
...No ...
I'm afraid I can't do that.
I'm not cut out for war...
...and I have a responsibility to propagate the wisdom of the gods that cannot be seen.


Please forgive me...
It seems my form has no effect on you.
Your form !?
That is why I hide my form from human eyes whenever possible.
Those who see me are usually captivated by my form and face and do whatever I wish.
I think I would have followed you if it were not for the teaching of the gods that cannot be seen.
I...


"Control forms but do not be controlled by them"...
What teaching ?
Forms ...
Uh...
So you're saying I'm a form...

But you will still come with me.
WOOSH
A form ...
We are a tribe that reveres forms! We never use it as a derogatory term.
Your Holi-ness!
Your Holi-ness !?
Together, we will seek out the secrets of the gods that cannot be seen...

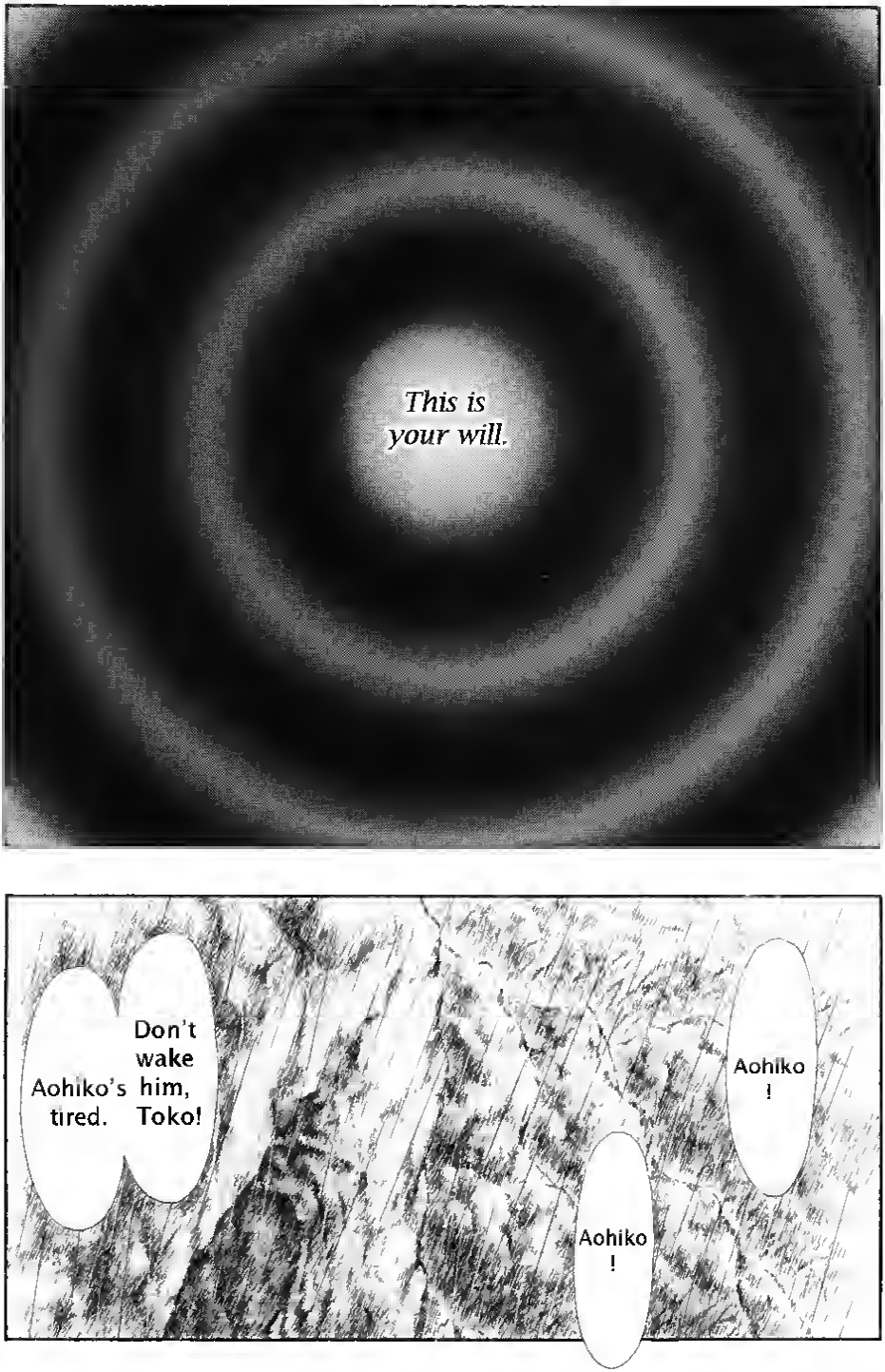
As it stands now,
the demigods and our followers
will succumb first-even if our numbers
and power are equal
to those of the demongods.

For the demon gods
love war in and of itself,
and the demigods
love peace.

If your gods that cannot
be seen advocated peace,
their wisdom should be
passed on to the demigods...

...on a quest
for the secrets
of the gods
that cannot
be seen...

You will come
with me...

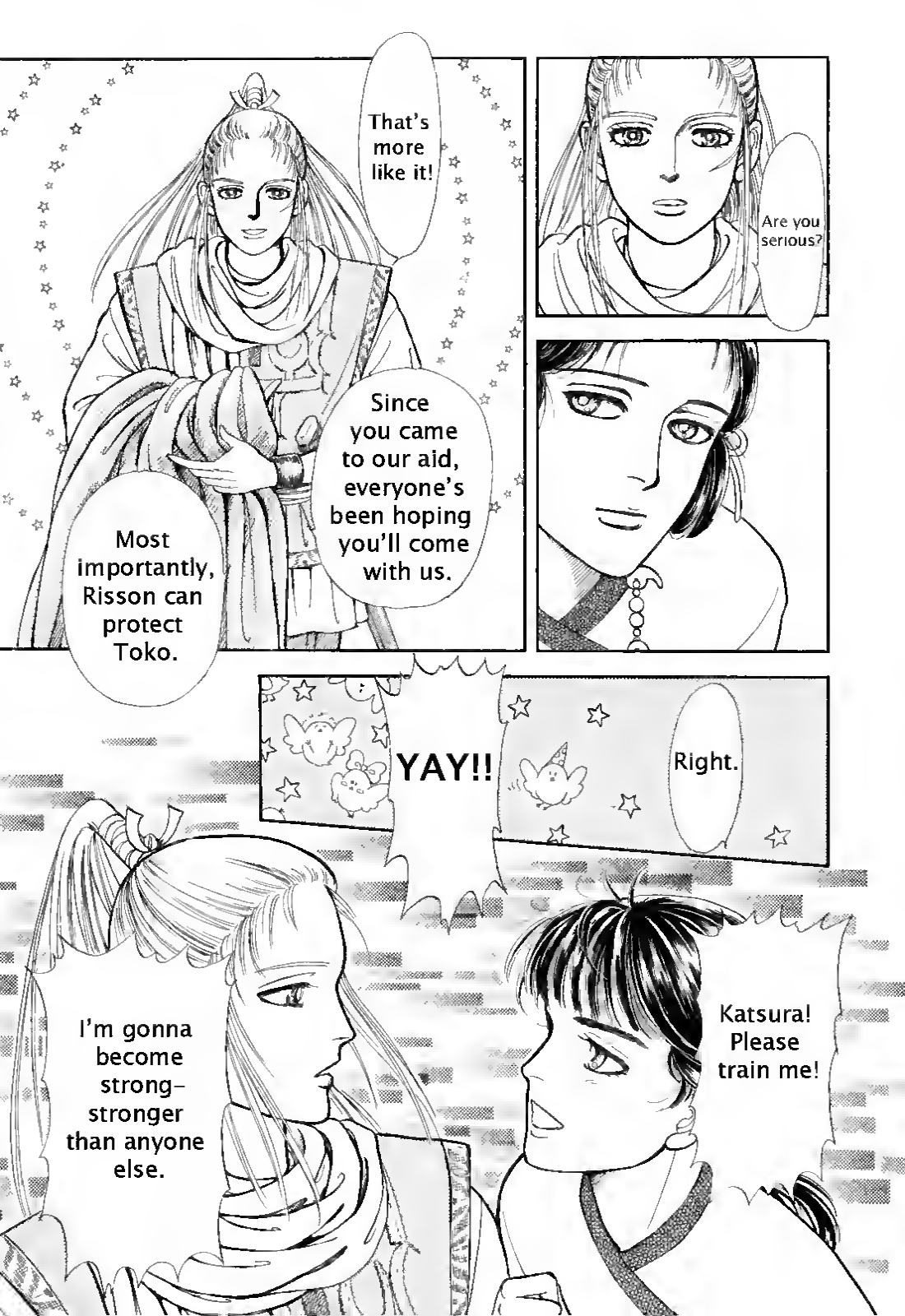

This is your will.
Aohiko's tired.
Don't wake him, Toko!
Aohiko !
Aohiko !

That's odd. The rain isn't leaking through.
His clothes ...?
He's going to catch cold.
But his clothes are wet.
Speaking of which, his cloak isn't here.
SPLASH
SPLASH
Maybe he went out during the night.
I thought it might be his.
I found it in the forest just beyond here.
Oh! Aohiko's cloak!
It's me, Katsura– I'm coming in!

Aohiko !? What happened?
Your clothes are all wet...
...and you dropped your cloak outside.
Aohi-ko!
My cloak?
That's strange... I fell sound asleep and didn't wake up once...
You may have been... dream-walking.
Remember how the Oracle would dreamwalk when she got worn out from chanting mantras for a long time?

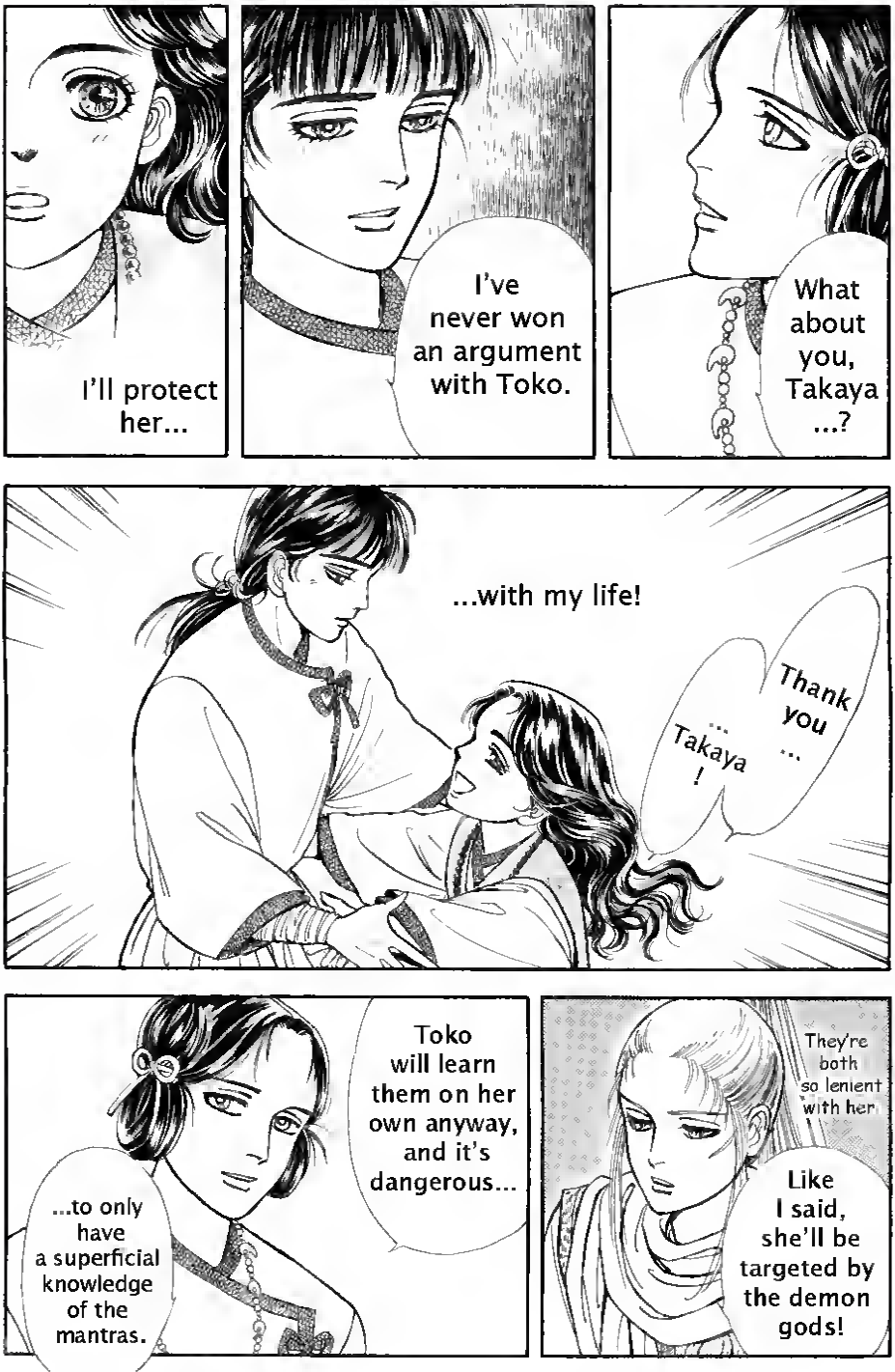
Dreamwalking: think of this as sleepwalking

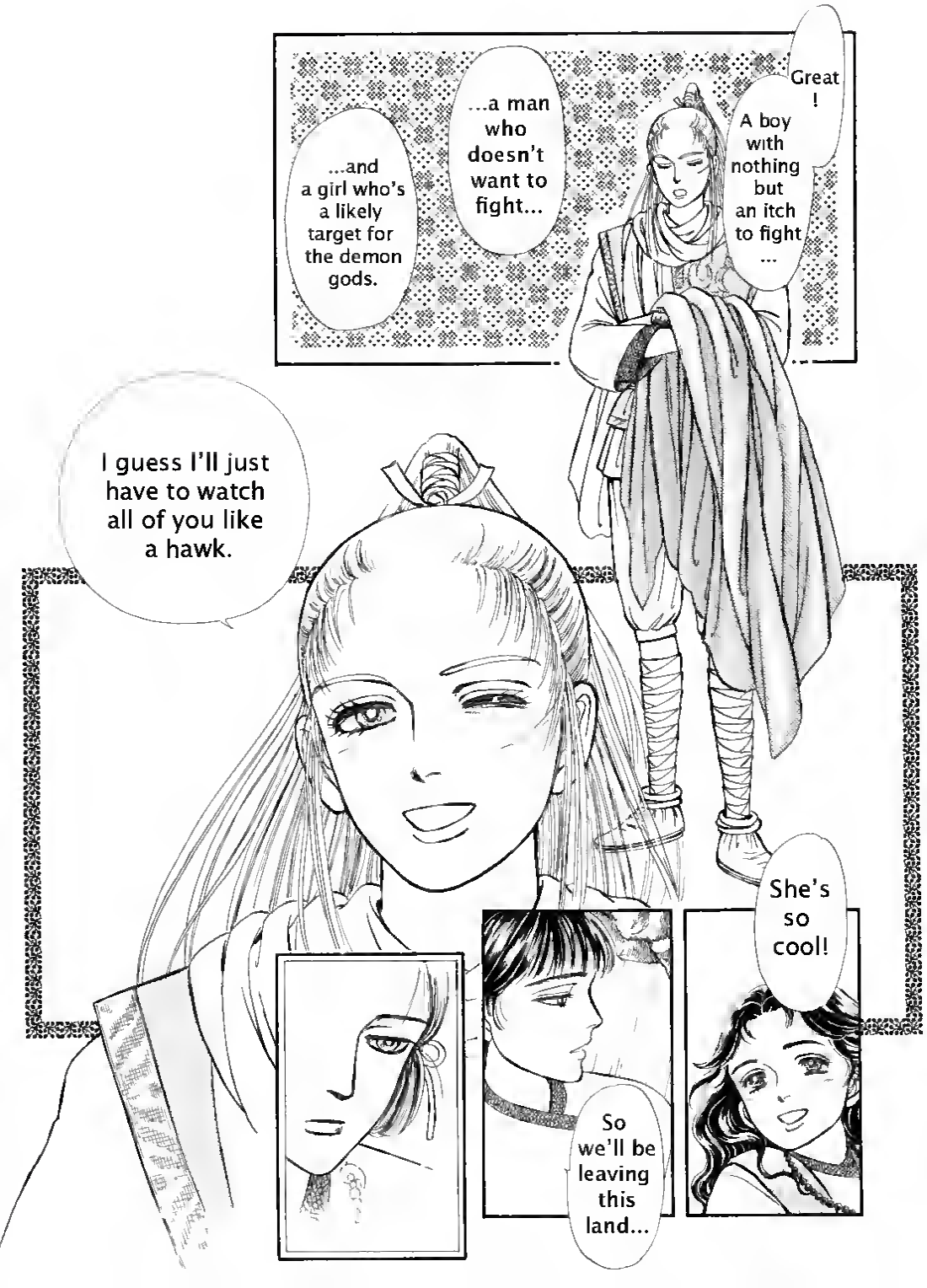
Huh!?
Huh!?
I'd like ...
... to go with him.
I'd like...
...to go with Risson ...
R...
Really!? Aohiko!
Why the sudden change?

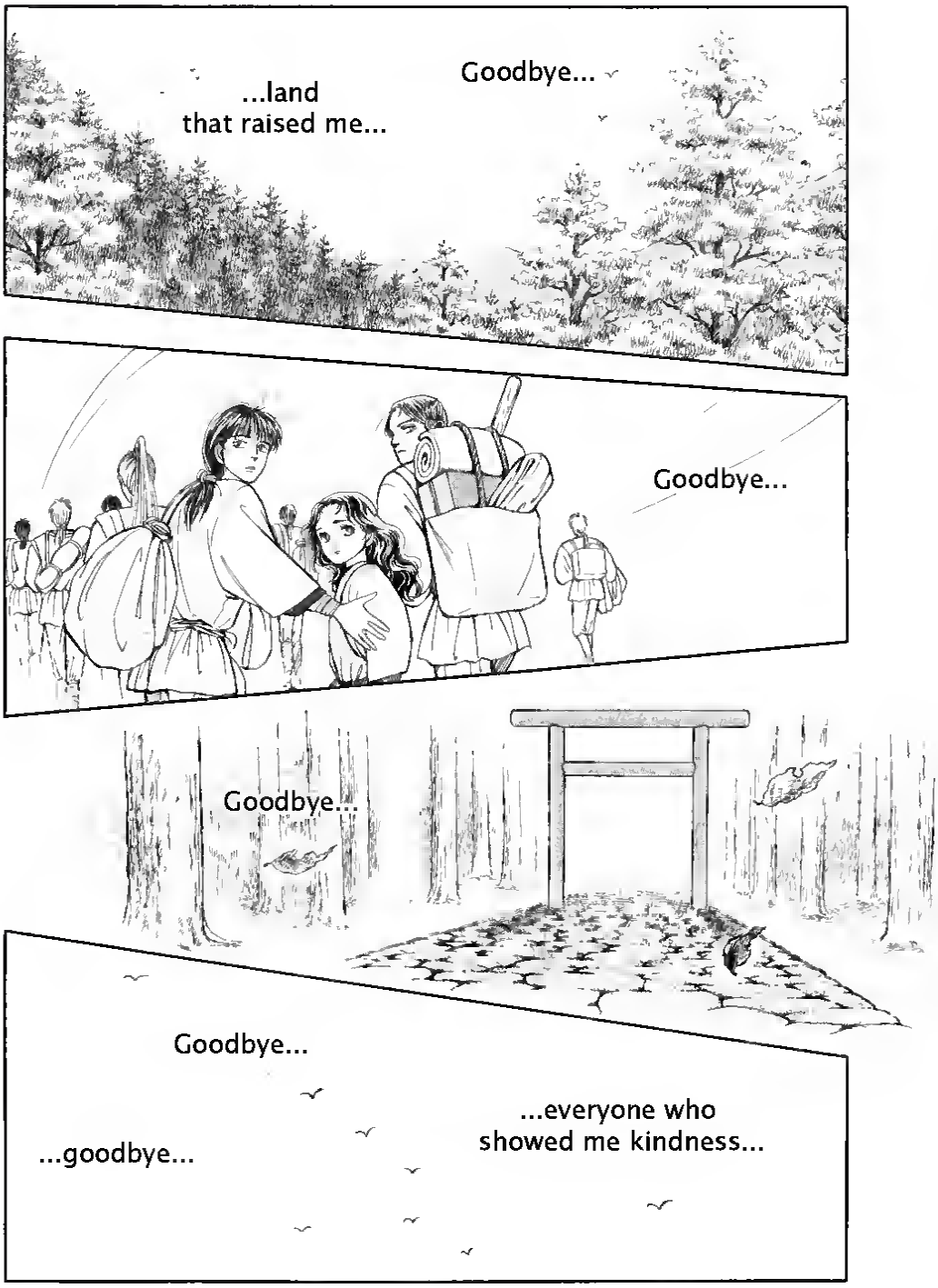

That's more like it!
Since you came to our aid, everyone's been hoping you'll come with us.
Most importantly, Risson can protect Toko.
Are you serious?
YAY!!
Right.
I'm gonna become strong- stronger than anyone else.
Katsura! Please train me!

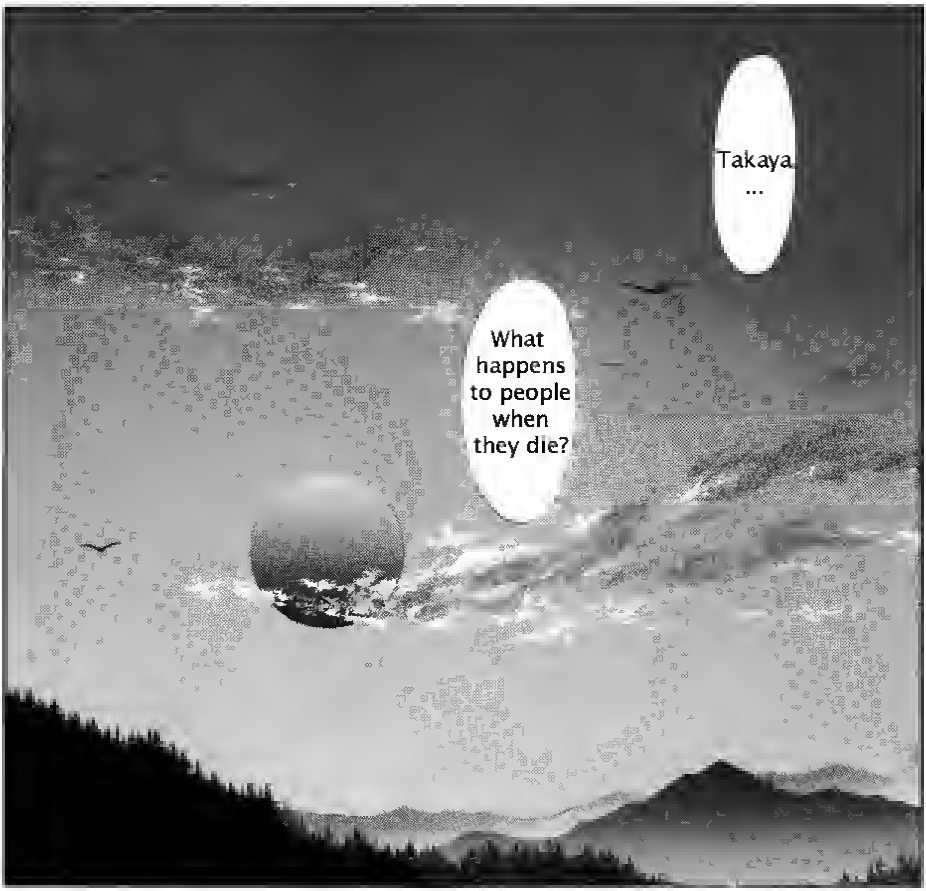
YESSS
YESSS
YESSS
Okay! You've already shown me that you have what it takes.
I'm gonna put you through the wringer.
No crying!
YE...
And I want to learn the mantras!
Toko!
I...

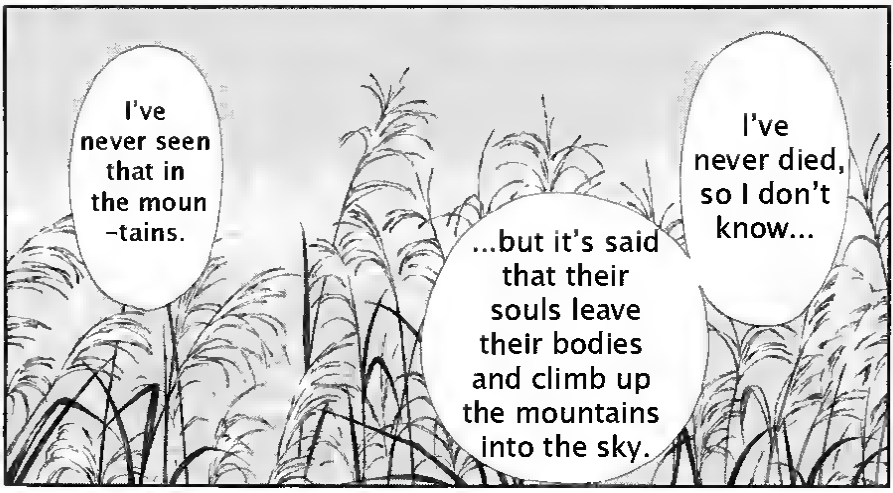
...help too!
I want to...
It's inevitable...
I can't stop it.
I admire your attitude, but I'm against it.
...Io Loko...
First...


I'll protect her...
I've never won an argument with Toko.
What about you, Takaya ...?
...with my life!
Thank you ...
... Takaya !
Toko will learn them on her own anyway, and it's dangerous...
...to only have a superficial knowledge of the mantras.
They're both so lenient with her
Like I said, she'll be targeted by the demon gods!


Great!
A boy with nothing but an itch to fight...
...a man who doesn't want to fight...
...and a girl who's a likely target for the demon gods.
I guess I'll just have to watch all of you like a hawk.
She's so cool!
So we'll be leaving this land...

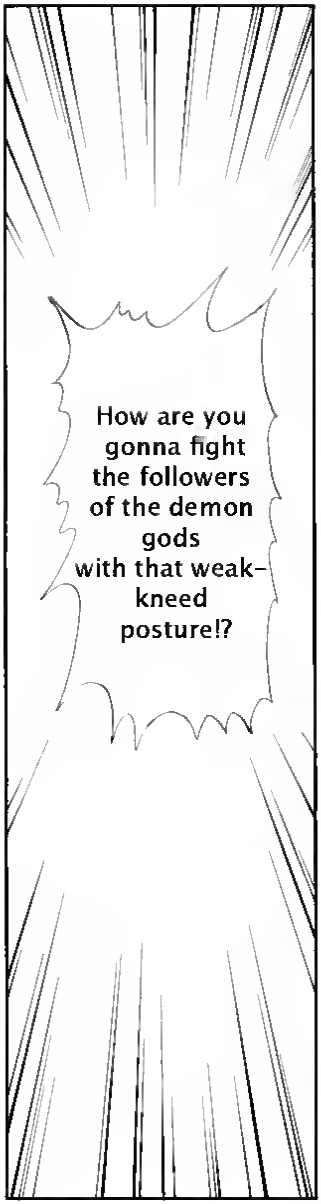

...land
that raised me...
Goodbye...
Goodbye...
Goodbye...
Goodbye...
...goodbye...
...everyone who
showed me kindness...

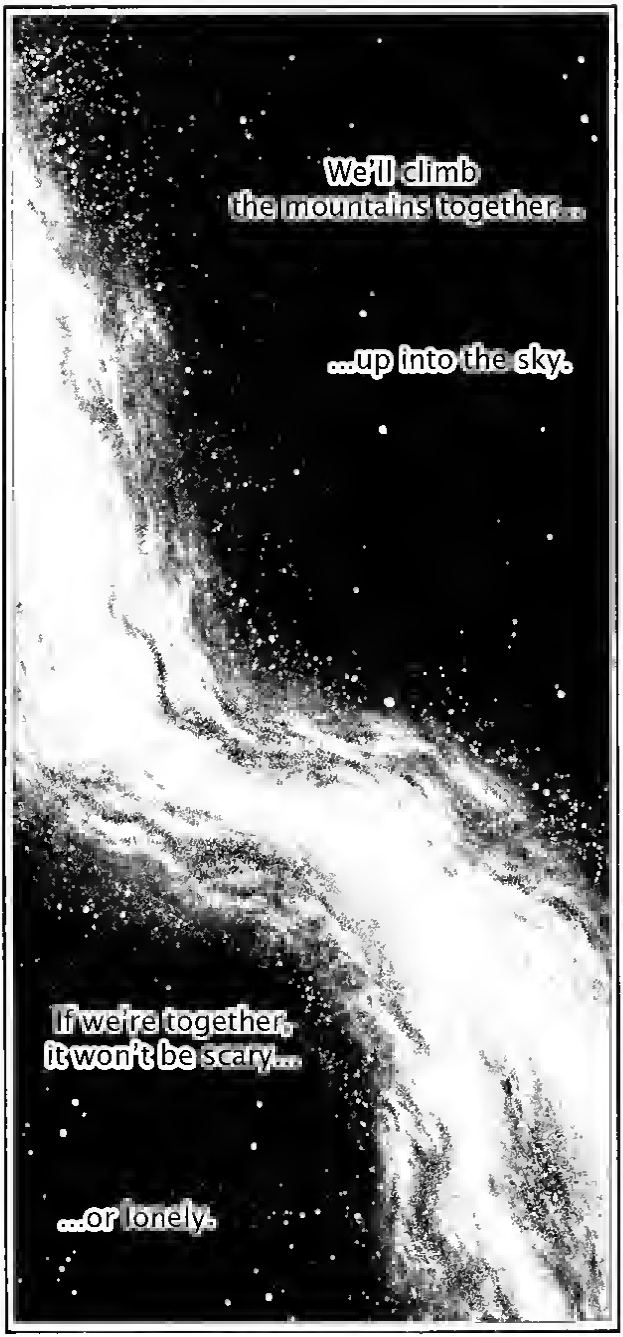

Takaya...
What happens to people when they die?


I've never seen that in the moun-tains.
...but it's said that their souls leave their bodies and climb up the mountains into the sky.
I've never died, so I don't know...

They say that souls are formless ...
...but each thing has its own form, significance and power.
I don't know for sure...
...but it seems the truly important things... are the ones that can't be seen.
Where do they go after they climb up the mountains into the sky?

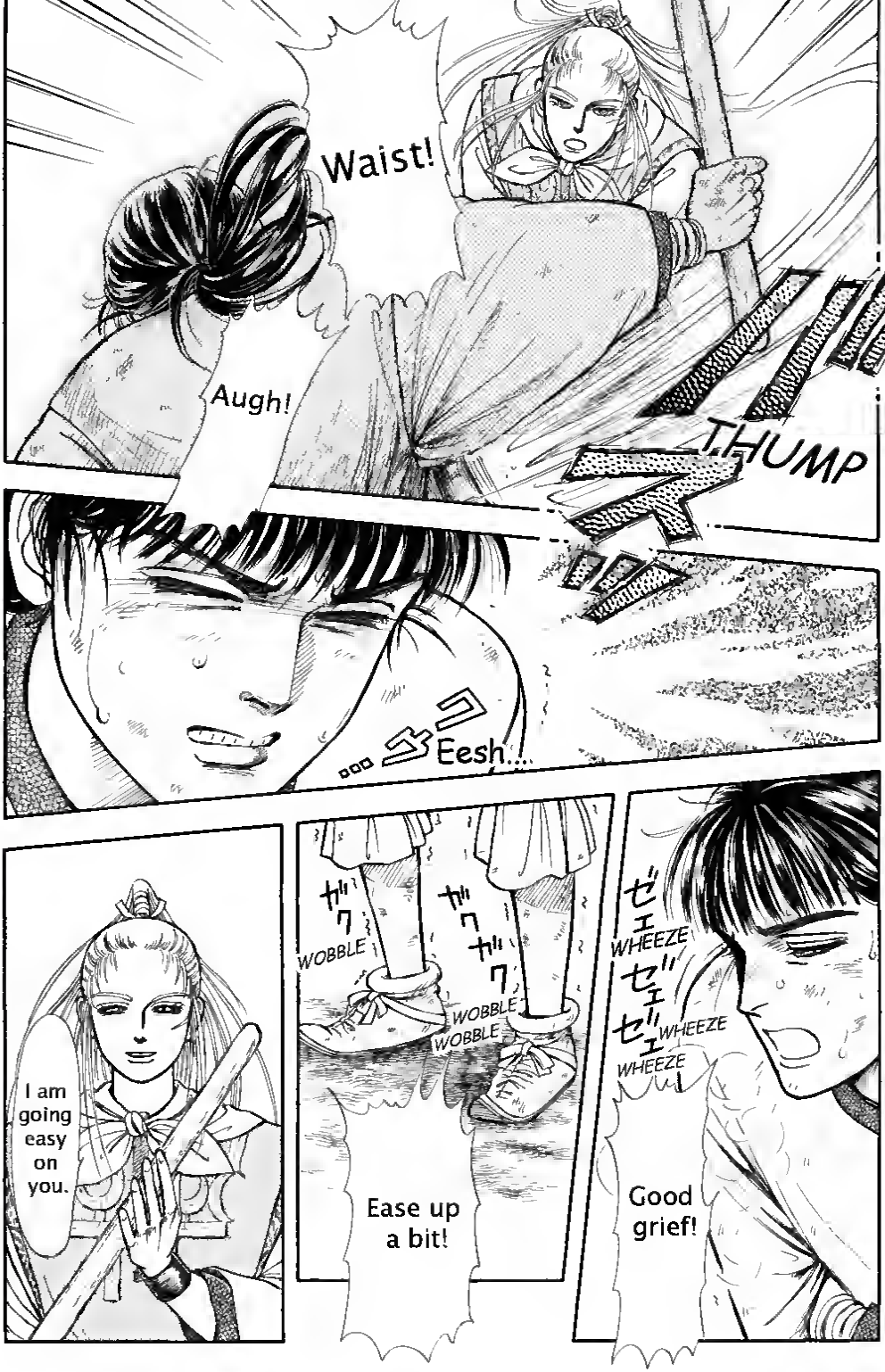
Where did everyone go?
Where will I go when I die?
Idiot!
Don't talk about dying!
If I die, you die with me,okay?
Idiot ...


How are you gonna fight the followers of the demon gods with that weak-kneed posture!?


We'll climb the mountains together...
...up into the sky.
If we're together, it won't be scary...
...or lonely.

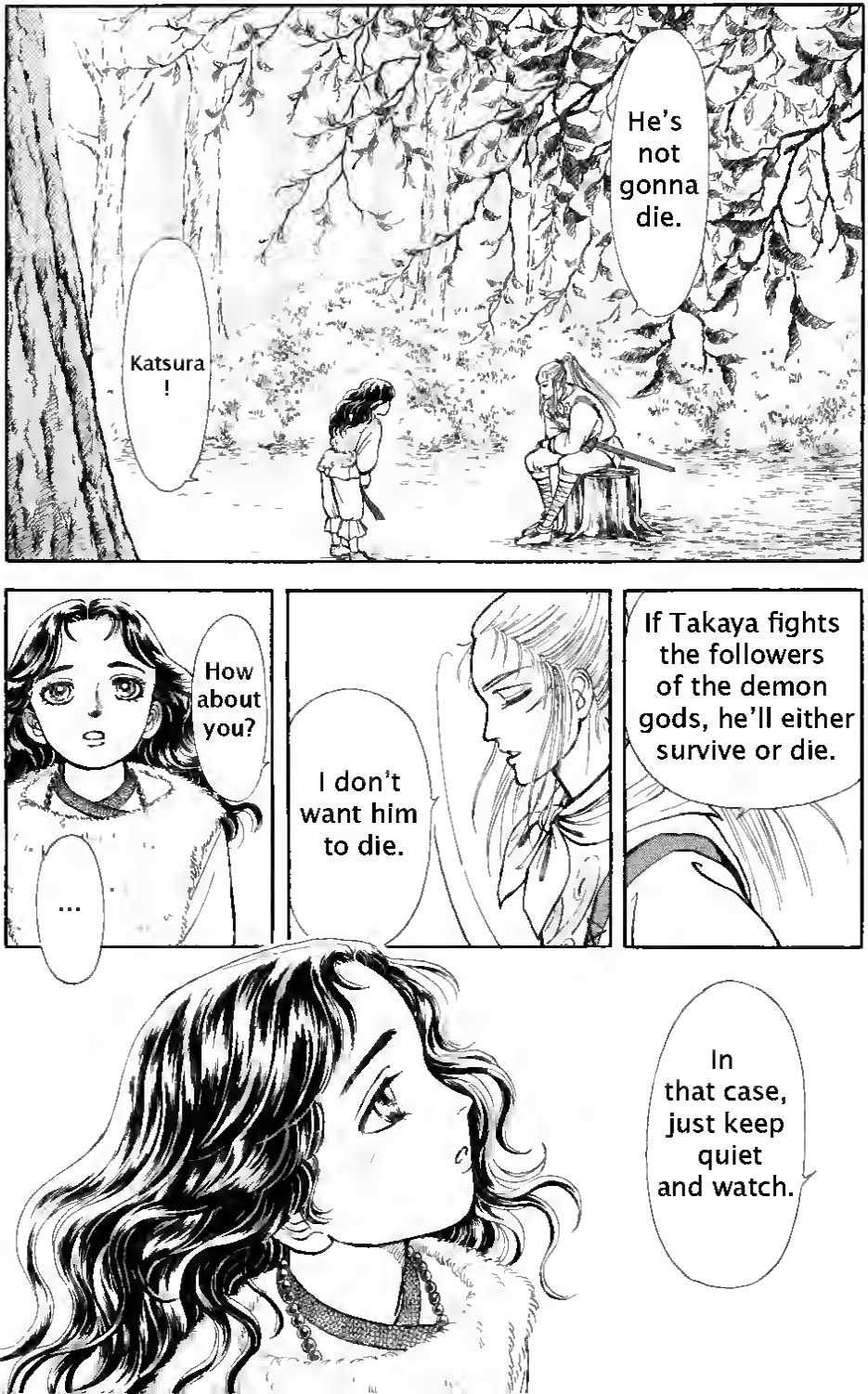
Keep your breathing even or spears will come flying at you from every direction!
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
He's all beat up I can't watch
She's gone too far- putting a complete novice through this
.that posture
SNICKER
Oh man
Here I come !
Don't look away!
PANT
PANT
Hmph.
Yeah keep talking I'll show them

CLUNK
CLUNK
Keep your eyes on the tip!
CLUNK
CLUNK
Otherwise, it'll get you!
SMAK
Hand!
Your arm!
CRAK
Shoulder!
THWAK


Waist!
Augh!
THUMP
…ふコ Eesh...
I am going easy on you.
ガク WOBBLE
ガクガク WOBBLE WOBBLE
Ease up a bit!
ゼェ WHEEZE
セェ WHEEZE
セェ WHEEZE
Good grief!

Why you ...!
You can hear Takaya all the way here...
Today we'll review the mantras you've learned so far.
Everyday he gets more bruises.
...
Soon he'll run out of unbruised skin.

No...
Does he tell you it's painful or tough?
He's doing his best for you.
So you do your best too.
Okay ...
...how he hurts all over and wakes up whenever he turns in his sleep...
I know...
...how he cools off his inflamed, bruised body at night...


He's not gonna die.
Katsura !
How about you?
...
I don't want him to die.
If Takaya fights the followers of the demon gods, he'll either survive or die.
In that case, just keep quiet and watch.

They're lovely eyes. You're going to grow into a lovely young woman.
It's kind of unsettling when you stare at me like that.
There's something mysterious about your eyes.
Why are the demigods and demon gods at war?
Why did the gods from foreign lands come here?
Katsura... how long is this war going to last?
One day a man like him will find the answers to those questions.
One day...
...Aohiko...

Oh... Snow!
It's snowing !
It's finally caught up with us.
Hey!
Tell him!?
All he has to do is look up at the sky.
I'll go tell Takaya about it.
I guess it's time to settle down for the winter.

It's the very first day of snow for the winter!

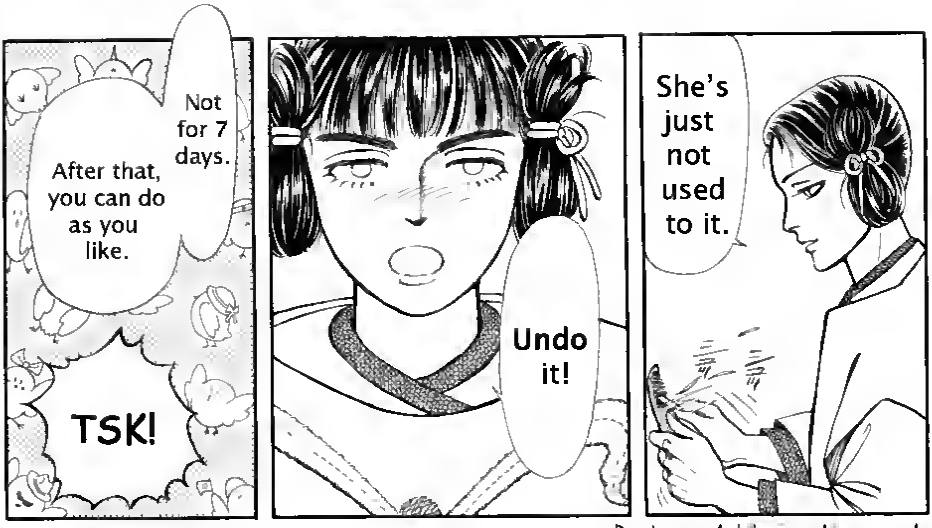
Takaya's birthday!

We've been traveling to avoid the snow, so he's been sulking about not knowing when he turns fifteen!

Today Takaya becomes an adult.
It's time for his 15th haird-ressing.

Stop staring!
What.
The first step is changing the way he looks, like this.
It...
... doesn't look good on you!
Toko!

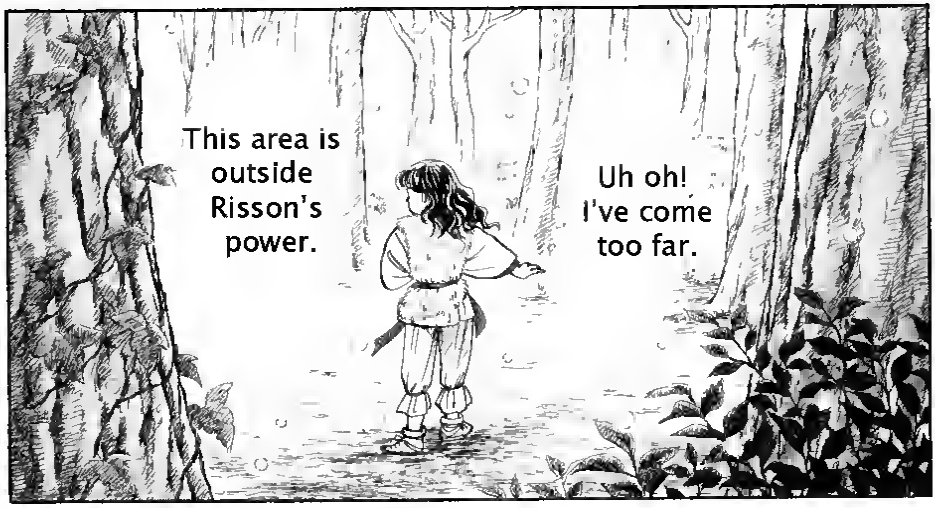
It doesn't look good!
It doesn't look good!
It doesn't look good!
It looked good on him!
Toko says it doesn't look good...



Dexterous Aohiko is making a comb.

Now that I think about it, I seem to look even more like a kid.
Does it really look that bad..?
Why did she have to say it like that...
Man...

Hey! That's the sacred mirror...



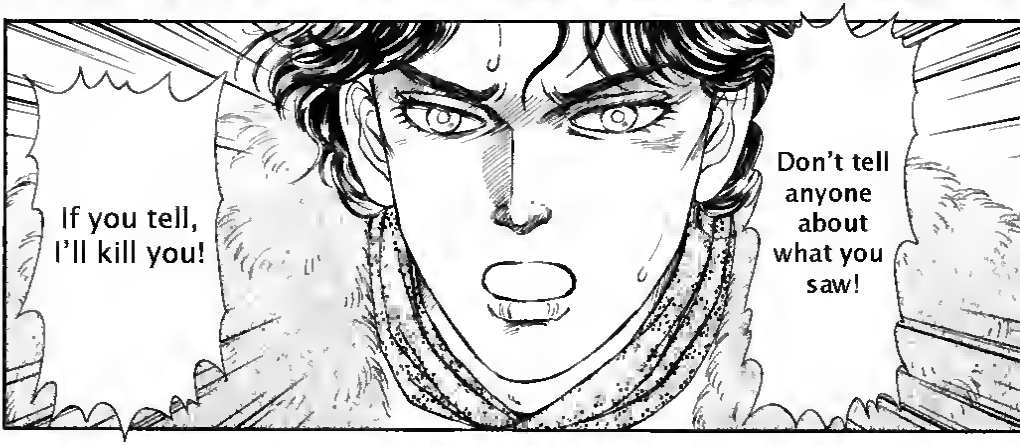
A bird!?
What happened? It sounds like it's wounded and in pain...
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
FLAP
TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
SQUAWK
FLAP
FLAP
TWEET
SQUA-A-AWK
TWEET
TWEET
Ichi-rota!?
TWEET
TWEET
TWEET
CHOKE

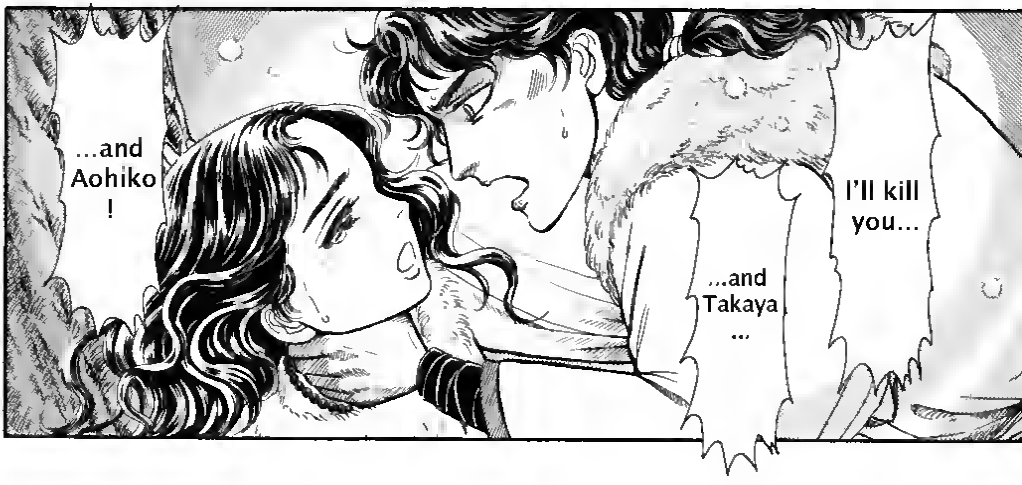
TWEET..
TWEET..
TWEET..

He smiled!
The bird...
AHHH!
DASH DASH DASH
Takaya !
DASH DASH

Takaya !
Takaya !
Ah!
ズサ…
SLIDE

Don't tell...
... anyone.


If you tell, I'll kill you!
Don't tell anyone about what you saw!


...and Aohiko !
...and Takaya ...
I'll kill you...

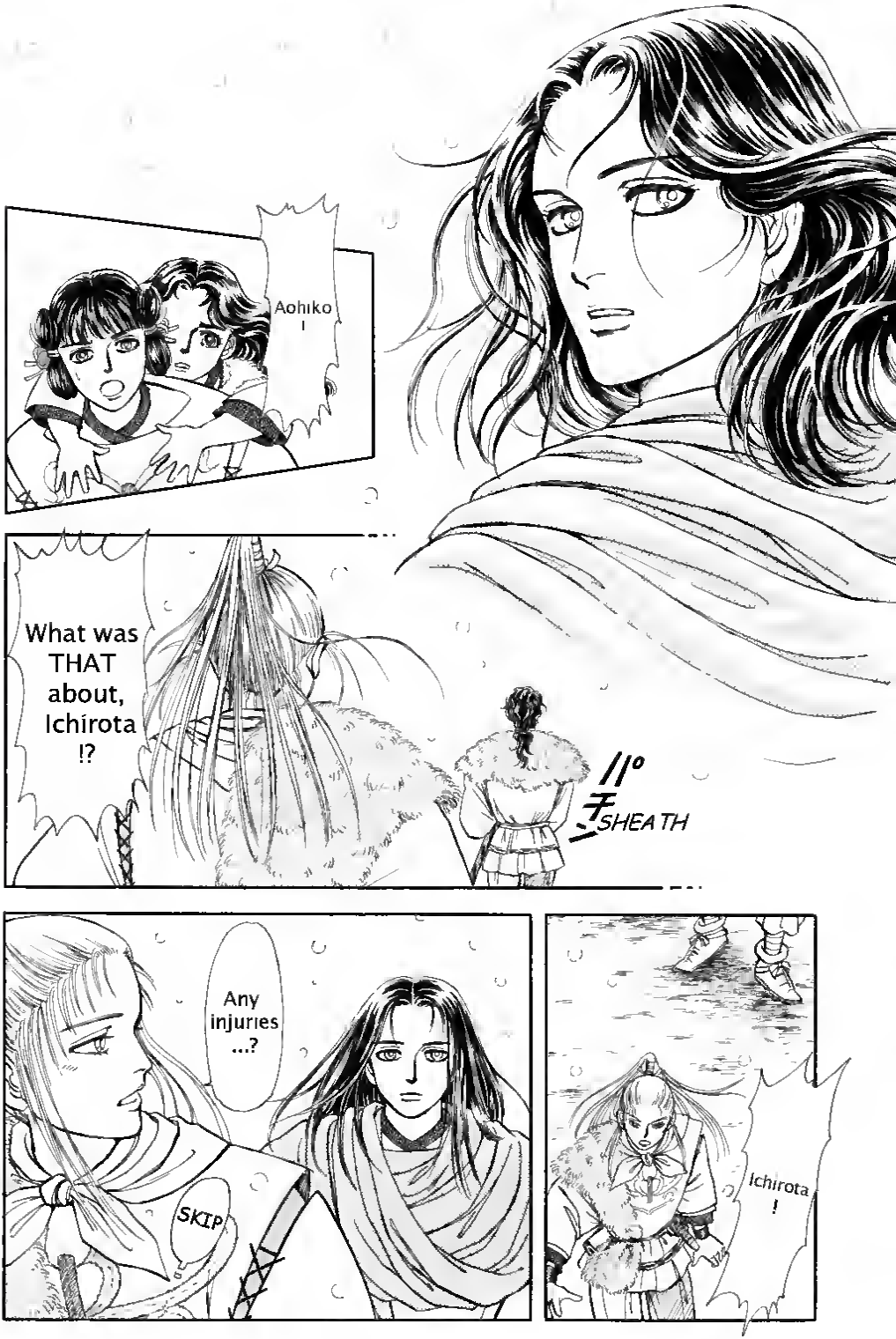
I won't tell...
... anyone ...
Toko!
Call out if you can hear me!
Takaya !
Toko !
Over there !?

Toko!
Taka-ya!
You had us worried. Aohiko and Katsura are over there looking for you.
What happe-ned? Did you fall down?
Toko !?
Paralyzed with fear
Sprai-ned ankle, huh...
Can't stand up?
There, there. You're safe now.
A wolf was chasing me.
A wolf ...

SCUFF
Ichirota! You startled me.
Patrolling the area? Good work.
Have you seen Toko around?
No!
MENVY is not an actual word.

If you see her, tell her to head back.
Okay.
Let's split up! You look over there.
Okay !
ヒュ
〃
WHISH
ナ
チ
〃
SHINK

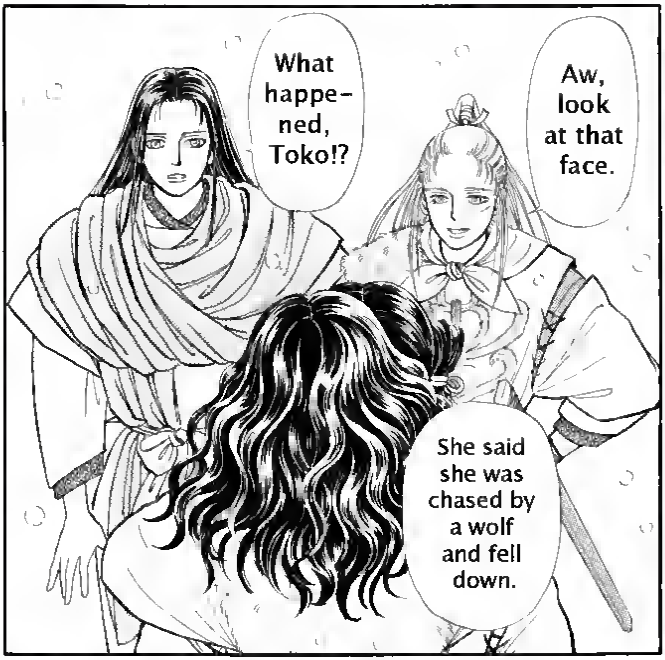
SHOOM
Ichirota !
あ？
Ah...


Aohiko
!
What was THAT about, Ichirota !?
!!°
チ SHEATH
Any injuries ...?
SKIP
Ichirota !

!!
Toko
!?
Whew! I thought he'd wounded you!
But what on earth ...
I'm fine.
He's a good swordsman. I don't think he got your ears...
He's been acting strange lately!
If you tell, I'll kill you!
I'll kill you...
...and Takaya...
...and Aohiko!

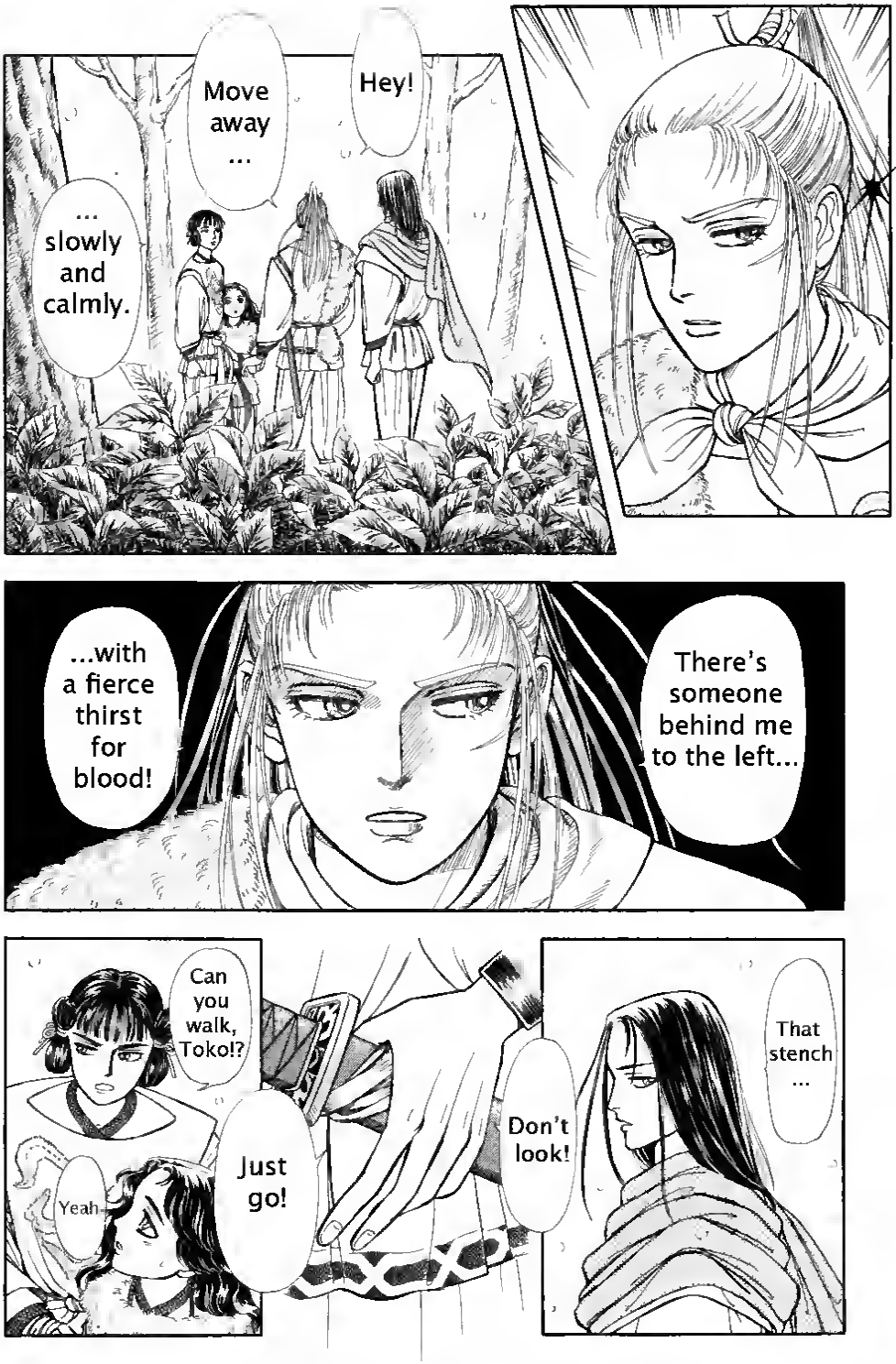
And I think his hand was shaking...

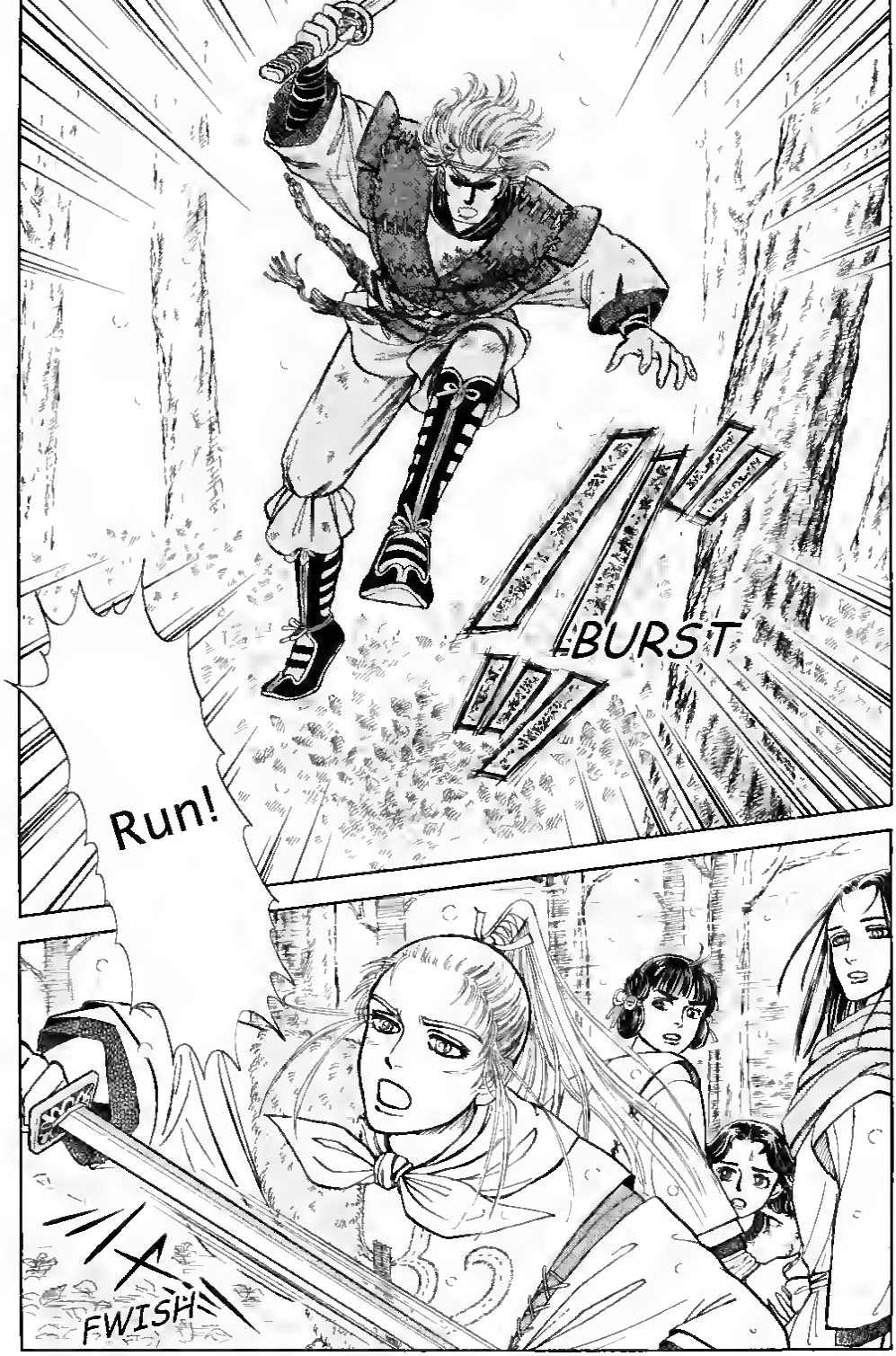
It looked like he had tears in his eyes.



But...

You were startled by Ichirota's sword, weren't you!?
Aohiko's the one whose ears were grazed. Do you get scared easily!?
But...
Takaya! I can walk now.
You sure !?
I was just sur- prised ...
Hehe...
I was sur- prised.
Ichirota meant what he said.
He meant it!


Move away ...
Hey!
... slowly and calmly.
...with a fierce thirst for blood!
There's someone behind me to the left...
Can you walk, Toko!?
Yeah
Just go!
Don't look!
That stench ...


BURST
Run!
FWISH

CLANG
CLANG
CLANG
It's a demon-god warrior!
DASH
DASH
DASH
Get out of here!
A wounded warrior...
HA-AAH

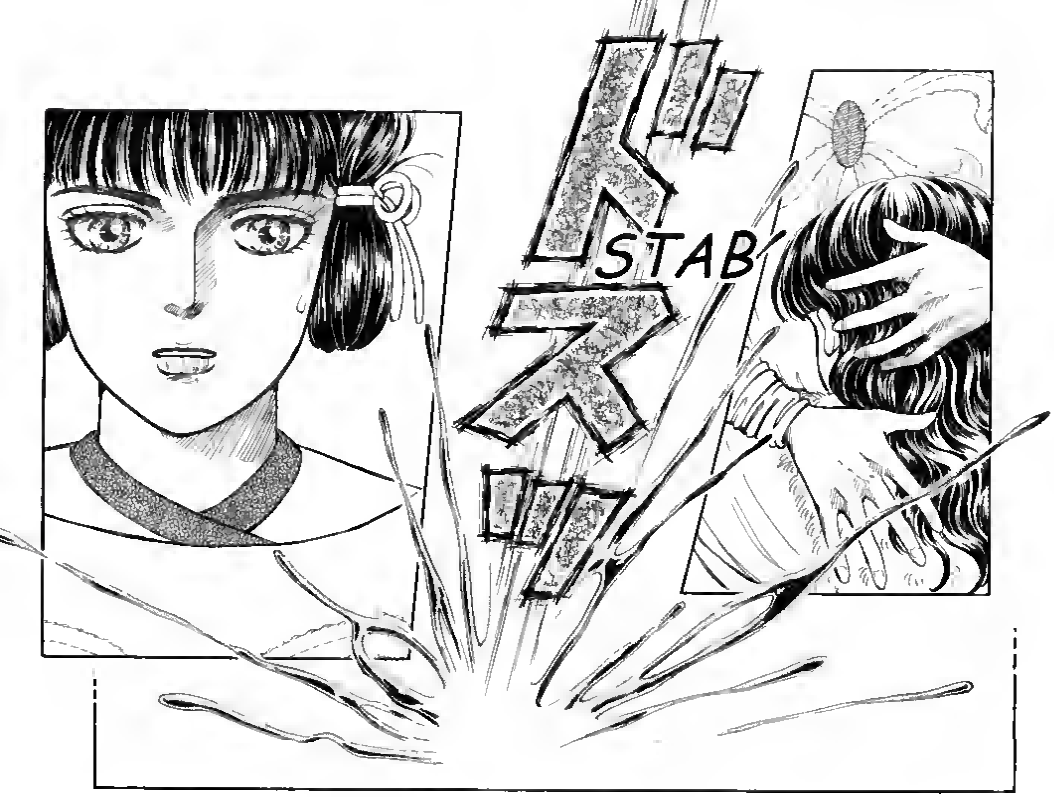
WHISH
SWISH
SPURT
SLICE
STRIKE
SWOOSH

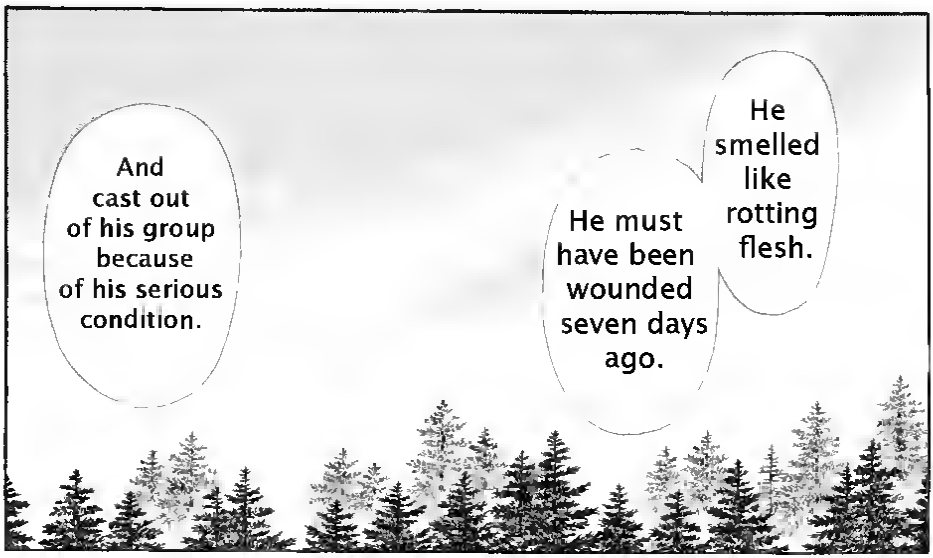
SFT
FWUMP

Demon ... head-band?
SIGH
A wounded warrior wearing a demon headband attacks until dead.
When wounded, you lose your senses and turn into a strong, ferocious beast!
It gets inside your head and won't come off until you're dead and decomposed.
* Kiyu apparently uses his power to fix it in place.
We were... concer-ned..
We would have only slowed you down –
G-give us a little more credit...
So what were you waiting for!? Don't tell me you were too scared to move.
SHUDDER

*Kiyu: one of the head leaders of the demon gods

GLARE
Ahh!
Stand back!
He's still alive!
SHINK
Right.
Just like the eyes of a wounded beast. He's no longer human.
When he dies, he'll finally return to his original self.
Except for you, Takaya!
This is the path you have chosen.
I'm gonna finish him off!
Look away if you don't want to see!


STAB


He smelled like rotting flesh.
He must have been wounded seven days ago.
And cast out of his group because of his serious condition.

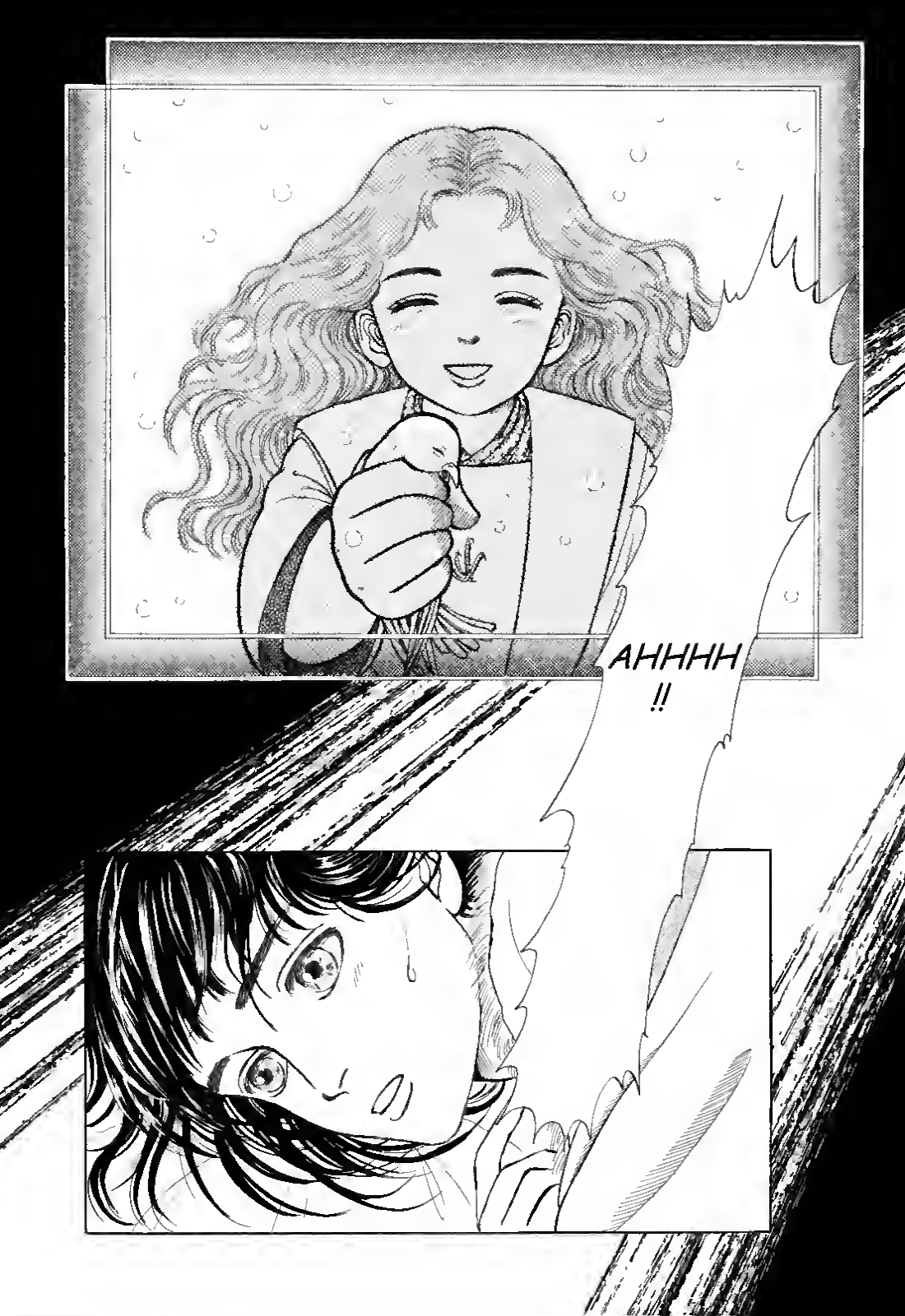
Is there any way we can anticipate the demon gods' moves!?
ちくしょう!!
UGH!
Let's send some of our best warriors to look for the place that was attacked.
In other words, something horrific happened not far from here.

Toko...

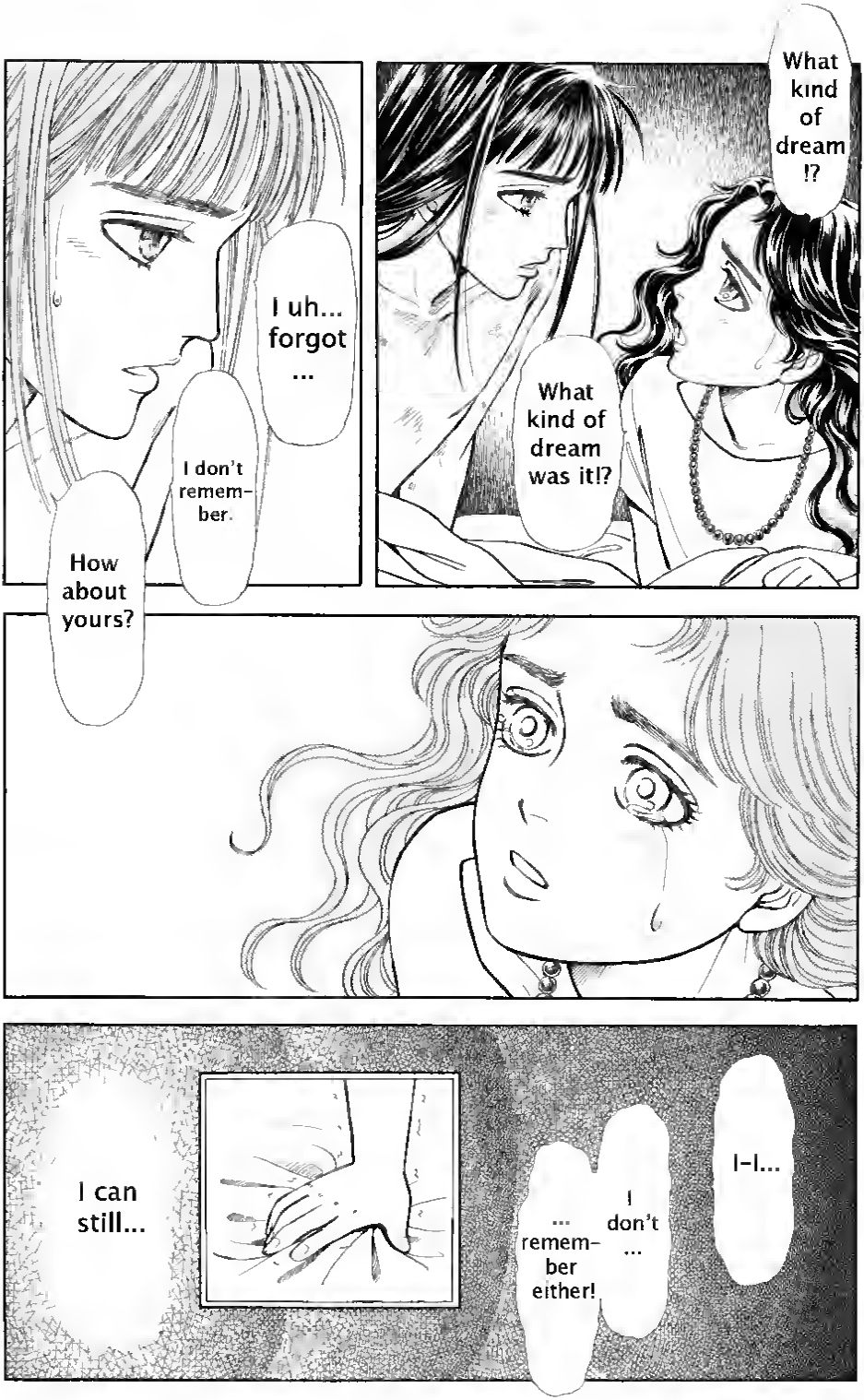
K-I-L-L I-T

What are you doing over there?
Kill it!

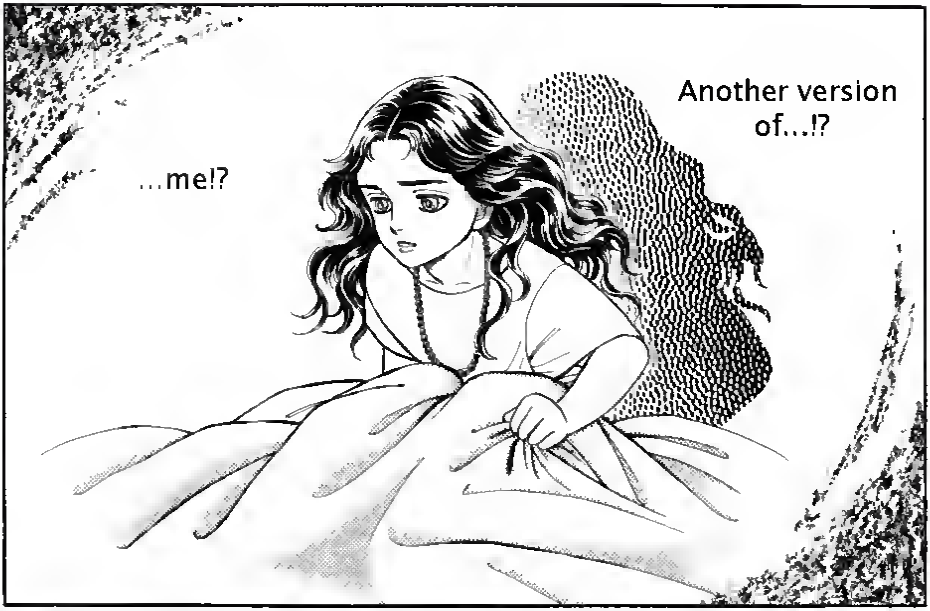
That's right. In your hand...
You're smiling !?
Life fades away. Enjoy it...
What do you have in your hand?
Enjoy that feeling!
Toko!


AHHHH
!!

Toko !?
Toko ?
Ah... ah... ah
A bad dream ...
What is it!?
A dr- dream ...
Me too... I just had a strange dream...

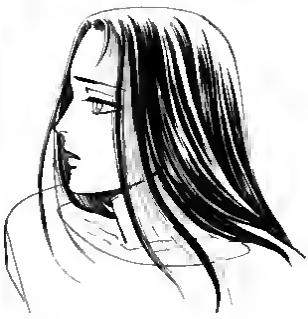

What kind of dream !?
What kind of dream was it!?
I uh... forgot ...
I don't remember.
How about yours?
I can still...
I-I...
I don't ...
... remember either!

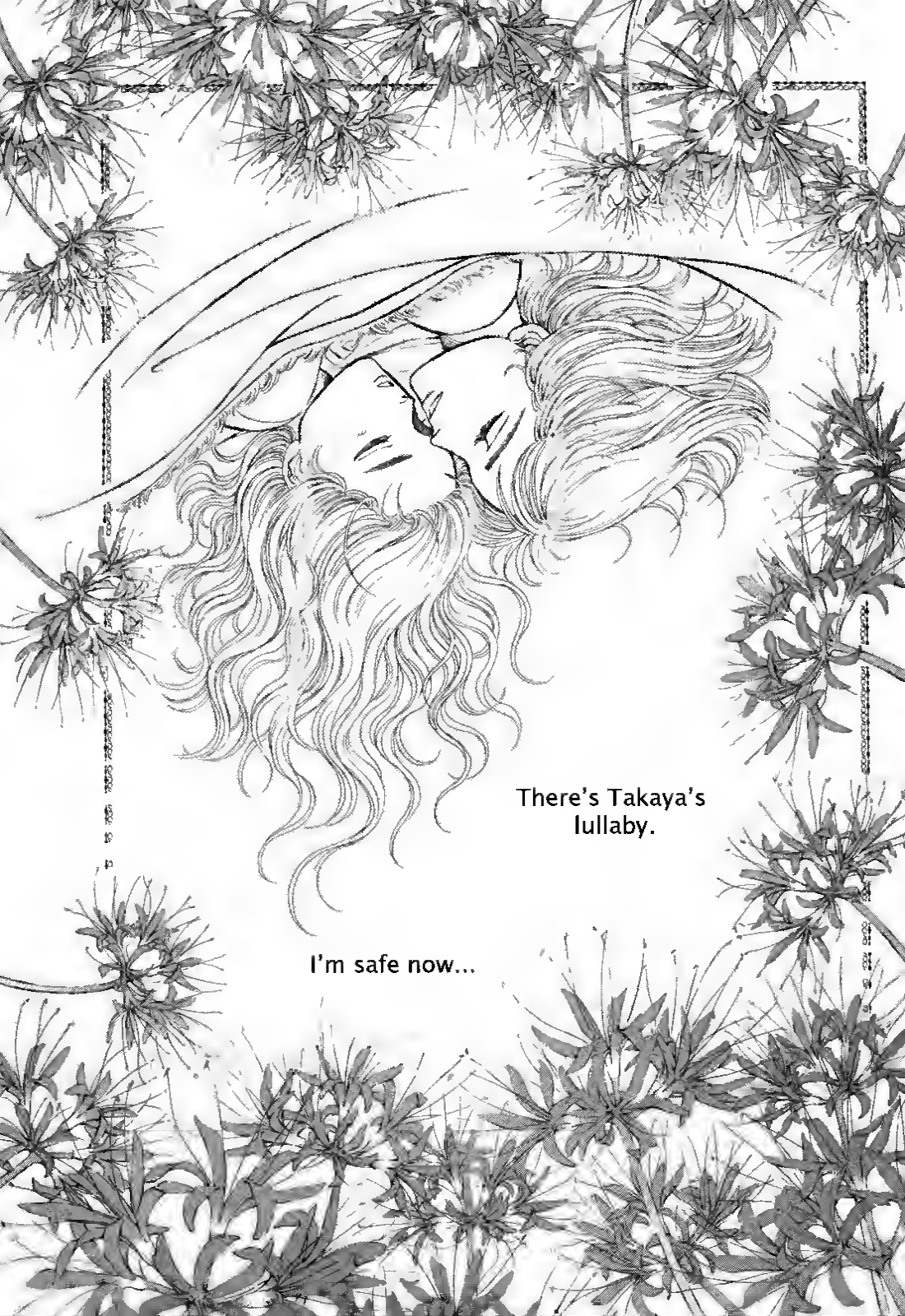
Not me!
It was Ichirota! Not me!
...feel it in my hand!
It was just a dream!
Not me. It was another version ...
...of me...

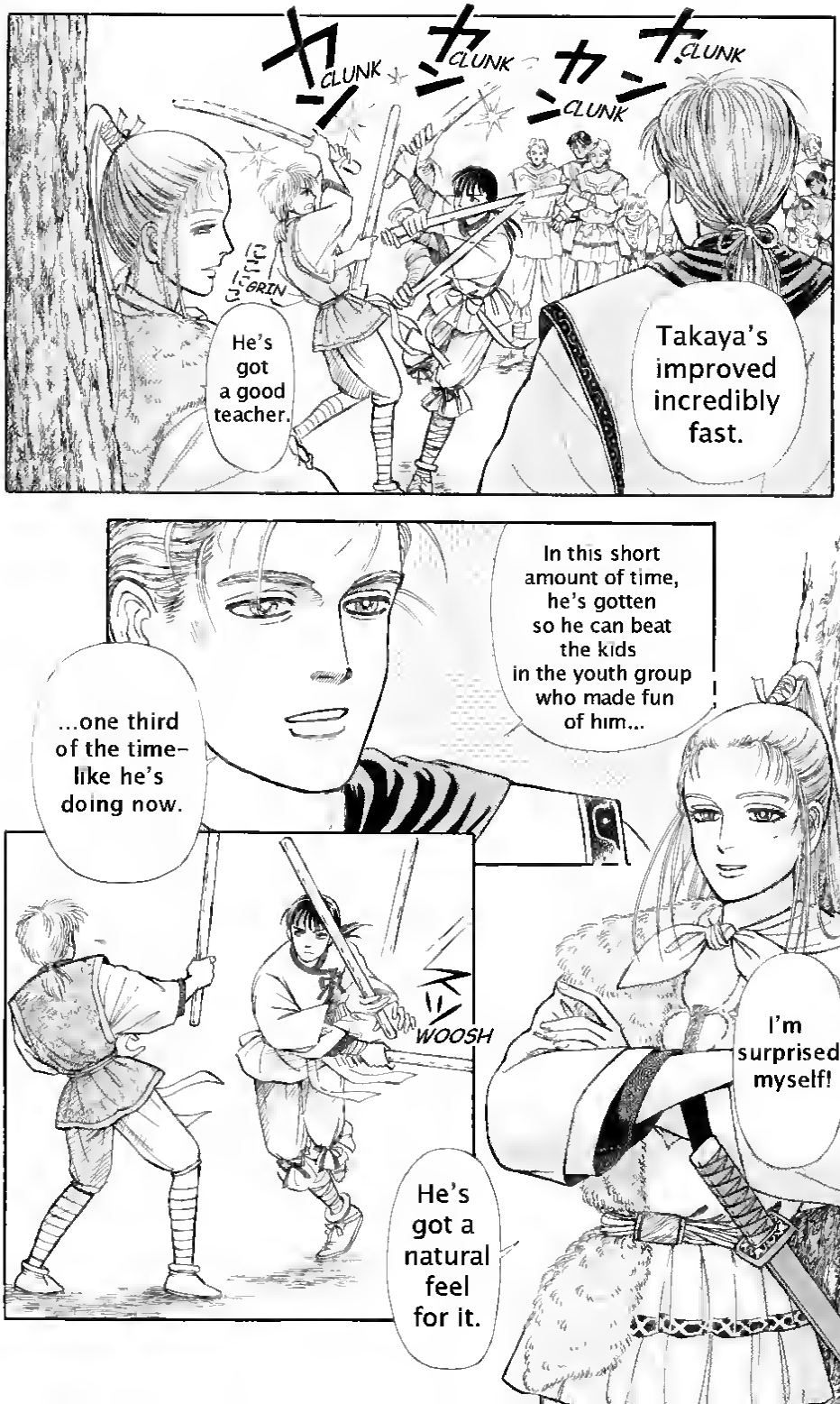

Another version of...!?
...me!?

In my dreams!?
It was just a dream.
Okay ?
Don't worry, I'll hold you. Go back to sleep.
Where is it!?

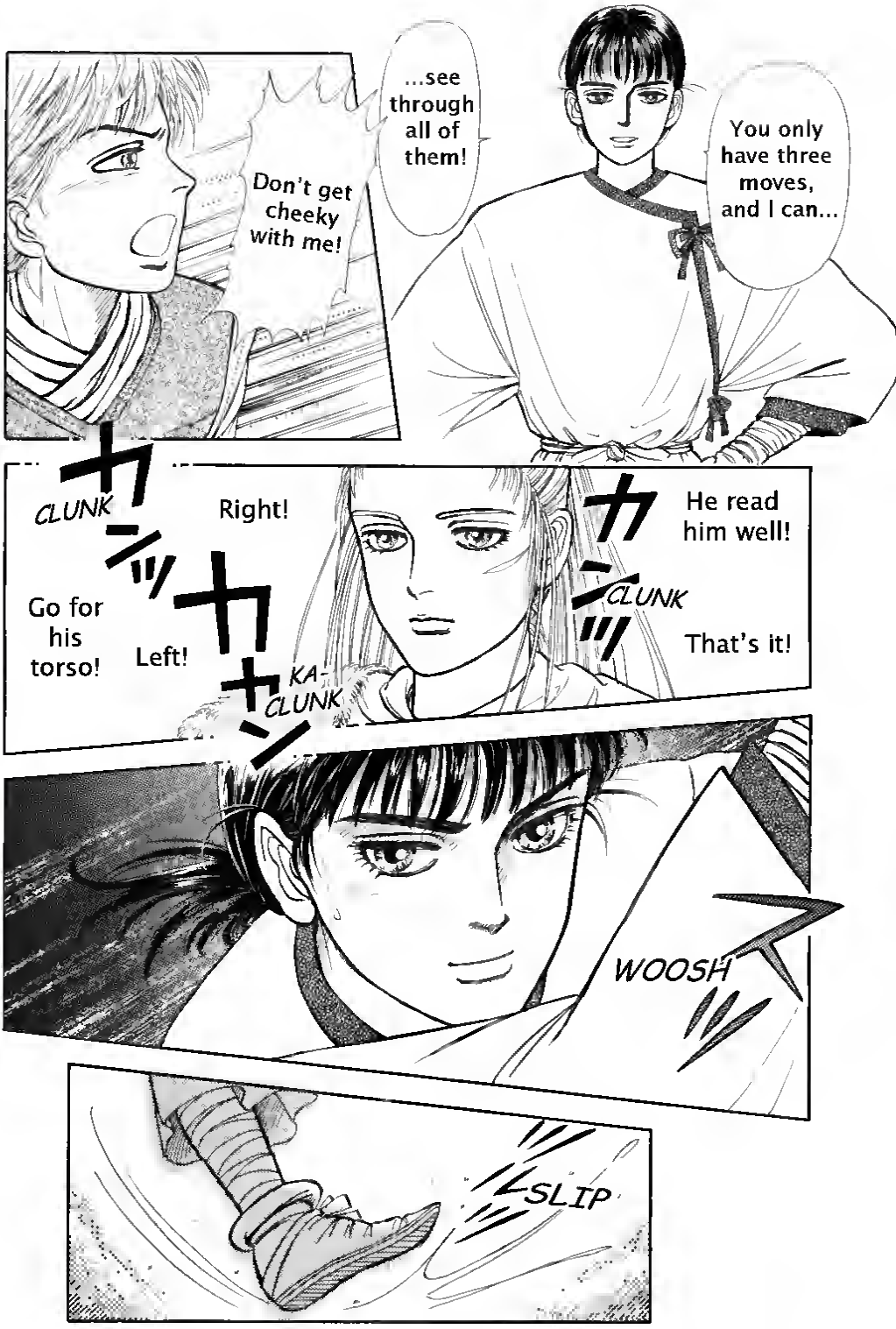
Just a dream...
A dream ...




There's Takaya's lullaby.
I'm safe now...


CLUNK
CLUNK
CLUNK
CLUNK
GRIN
He's got a good teacher.
Takaya's improved incredibly fast.
In this short amount of time, he's gotten so he can beat the kids in the youth group who made fun of him...
...one third of the time– like he's doing now.
WOOSH
I'm surprised myself!
He's got a natural feel for it.

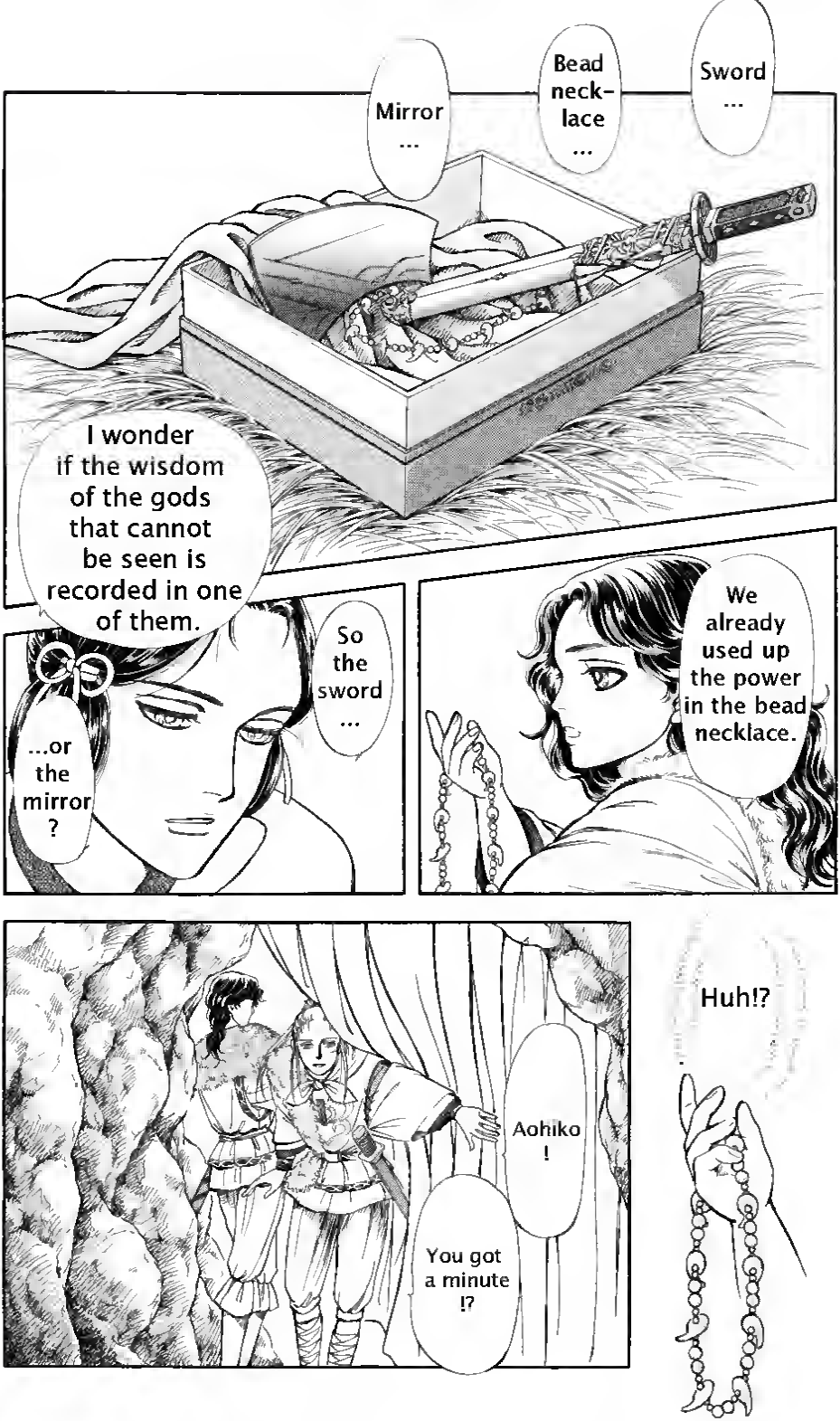
He'll get bigger and stronger.
He's right in the middle of a growth spurt.
Yep ...
He's going to be a strong one.
What did you say!?
You can't beat me anymore.
Koma, right?


Don't get cheeky with me!
...see through all of them!
You only have three moves, and I can...
CLUNK
Right!
Go for his torso!
Left!
KA-CLUNK
He read him well!
CLUNK
That's it!
WOOSH
SLIP

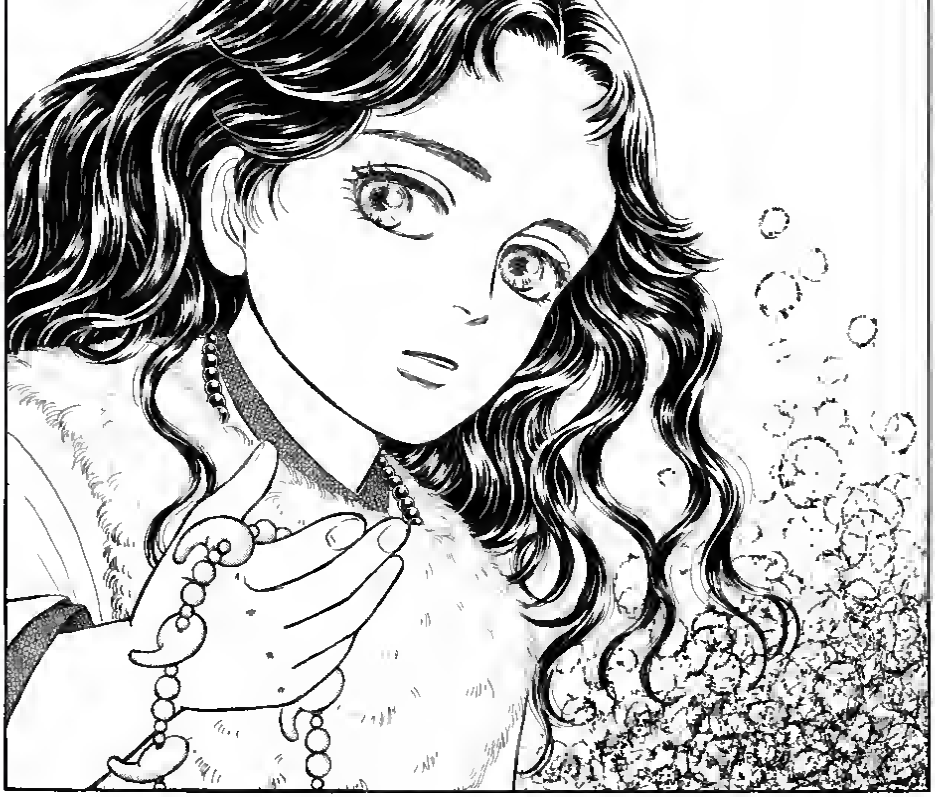
Fool!
Ah!
CRASH
すてんっ
UHGH...
SMIRK
にやっ
AHHH!
WHACK
WHACK
THWAK
THWAK
THWAK
HAAH!
She's definitely a good teacher
Dummy!
Block-head!
Idiot!
Beat him up good!
Don't hold back!
Harder!
Eesh.
おーあ
Hoo-boy.
おやおや
Get him! Get him!

A tribe of the gods that cannot be seen?
It's on the other side of the mountain to the east.
Chief!
We found the village that was recently attacked by the demon gods.
It's a beautiful place covered in snow. A red torii was the only thing that stood out.
Yes...
Show us the way!
Ichirota!
Okay...
Chief!
I'm going to go check it out with Aohiko.

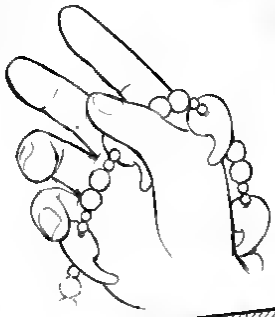
Whatcha doin' Aohiko?
The Oracle said she'd buried the sacred treasures and books of wisdom at the base of that tree, right!?
Yes!
So the books of wisdom should also be in this box.


Mirror ...
Bead neck-lace ...
Sword ...
I wonder if the wisdom of the gods that cannot be seen is recorded in one of them.
So the sword ...
...or the mirror ?
We already used up the power in the bead necklace.
Aohiko !
You got a minute !?
Huh!?

I see ...
Okay !
...
ゴクリ
GULP
Toko! I'm going out for a bit.
Put the treasures away, okay?
Don't worry. I'm going with him
FLEX
Be careful.
Aohiko !
Hm!?
So is a very scary man...

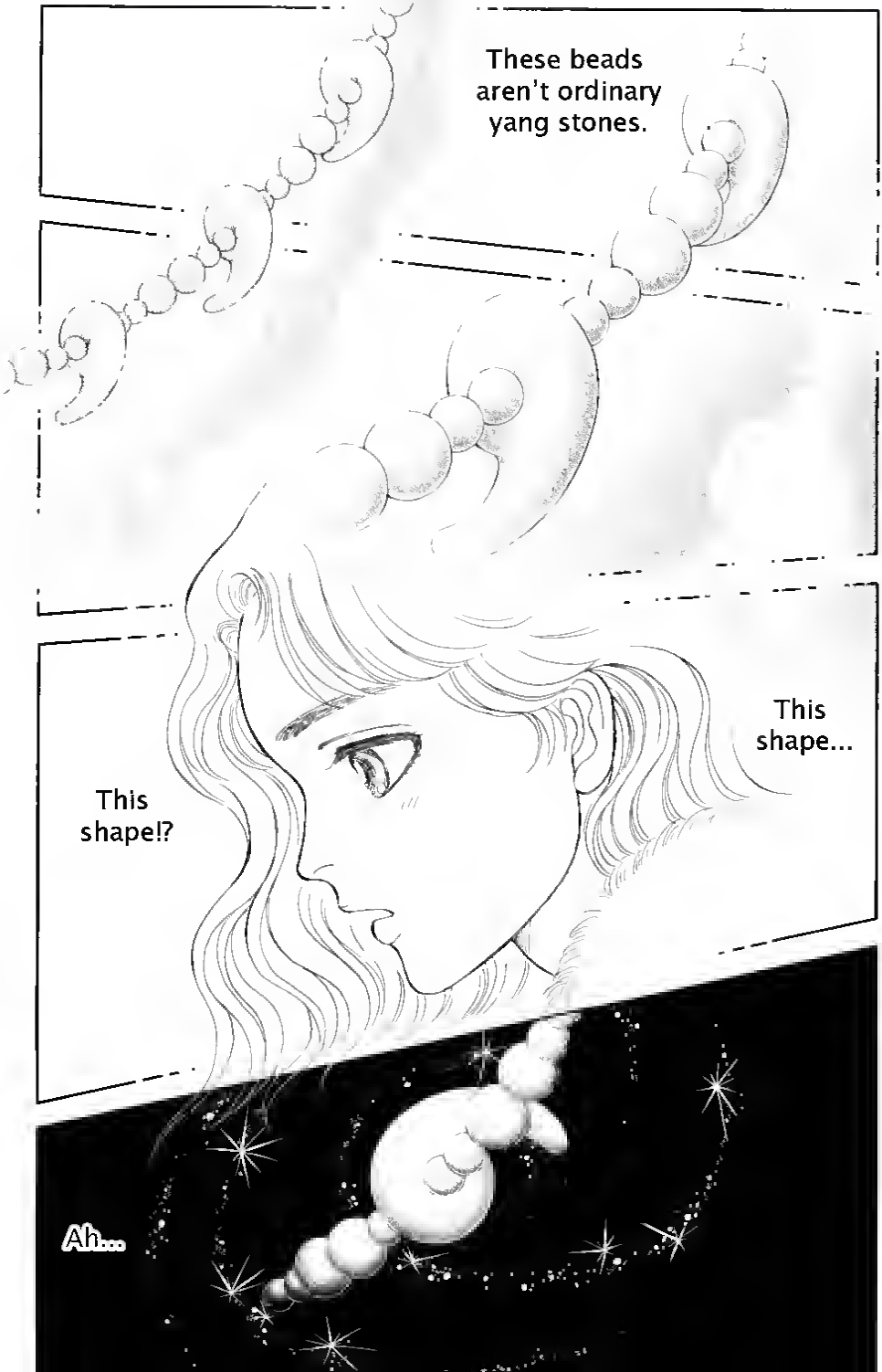


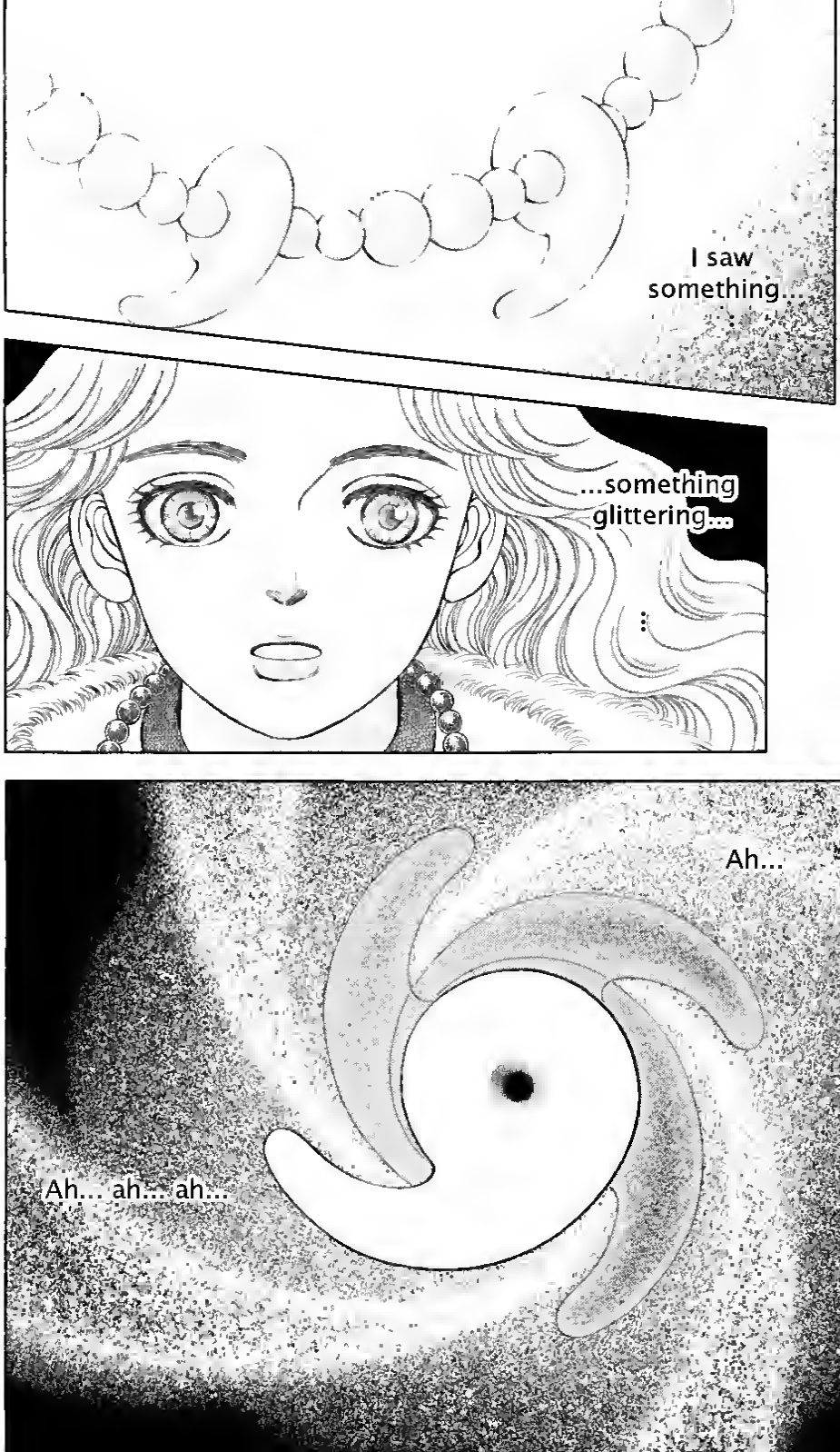
...I wasn't imagining things!

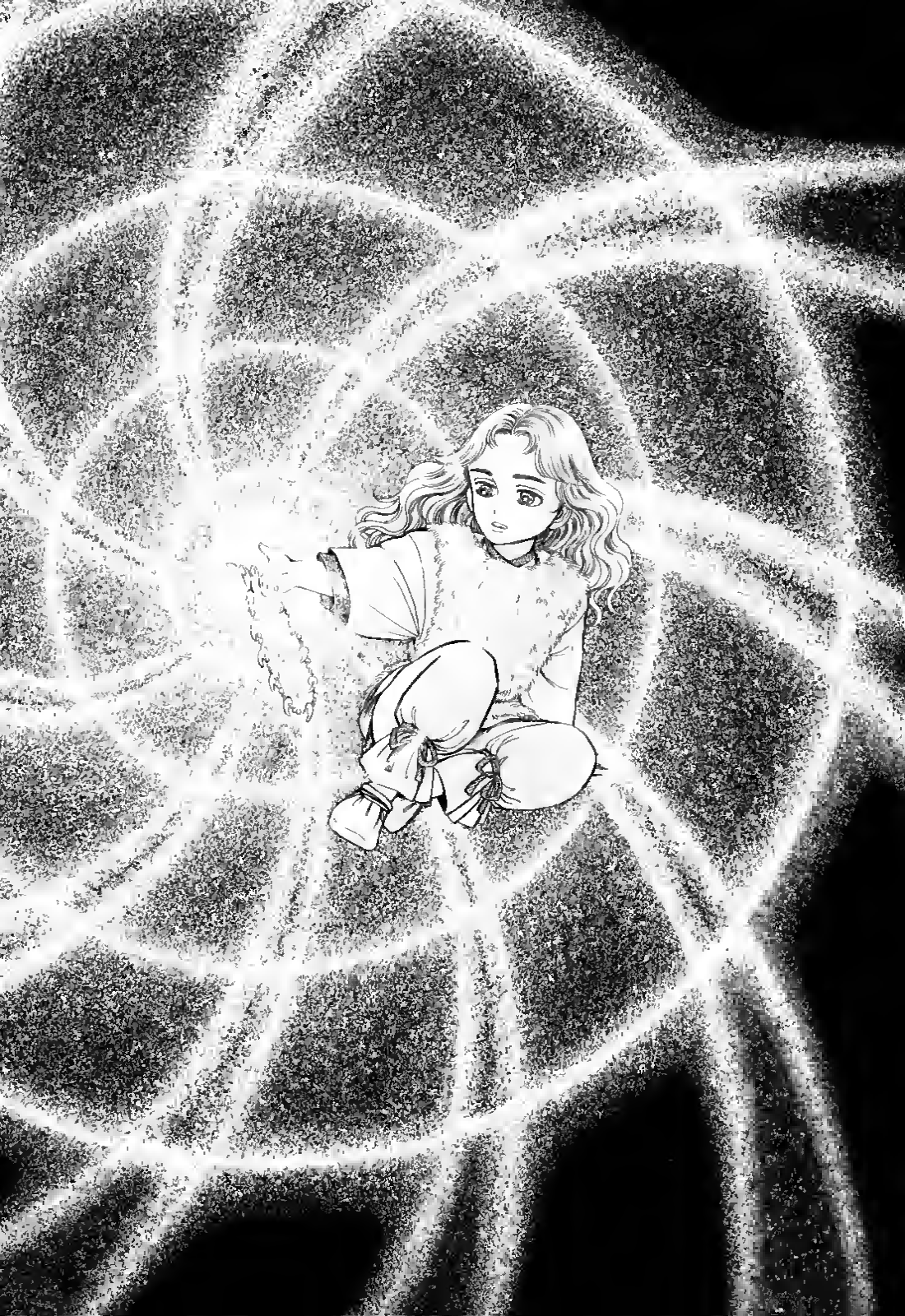


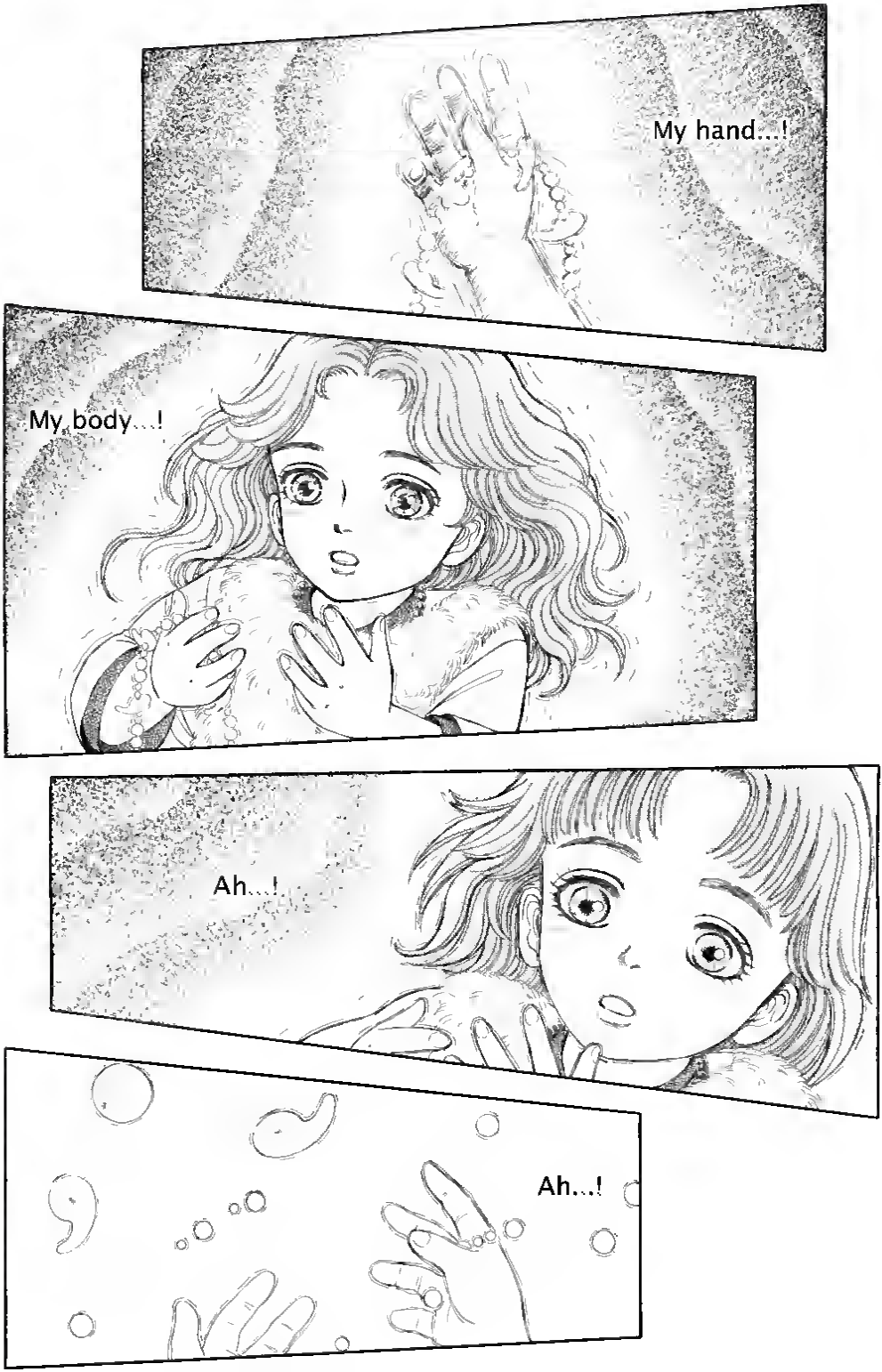
So...

The power of the bead necklace is returning!


These beads aren't ordinary yang stones.
This shape!?
This shape...
Ah...


I saw something...
...something glittering...
Ah...
Ah... ah... ah...

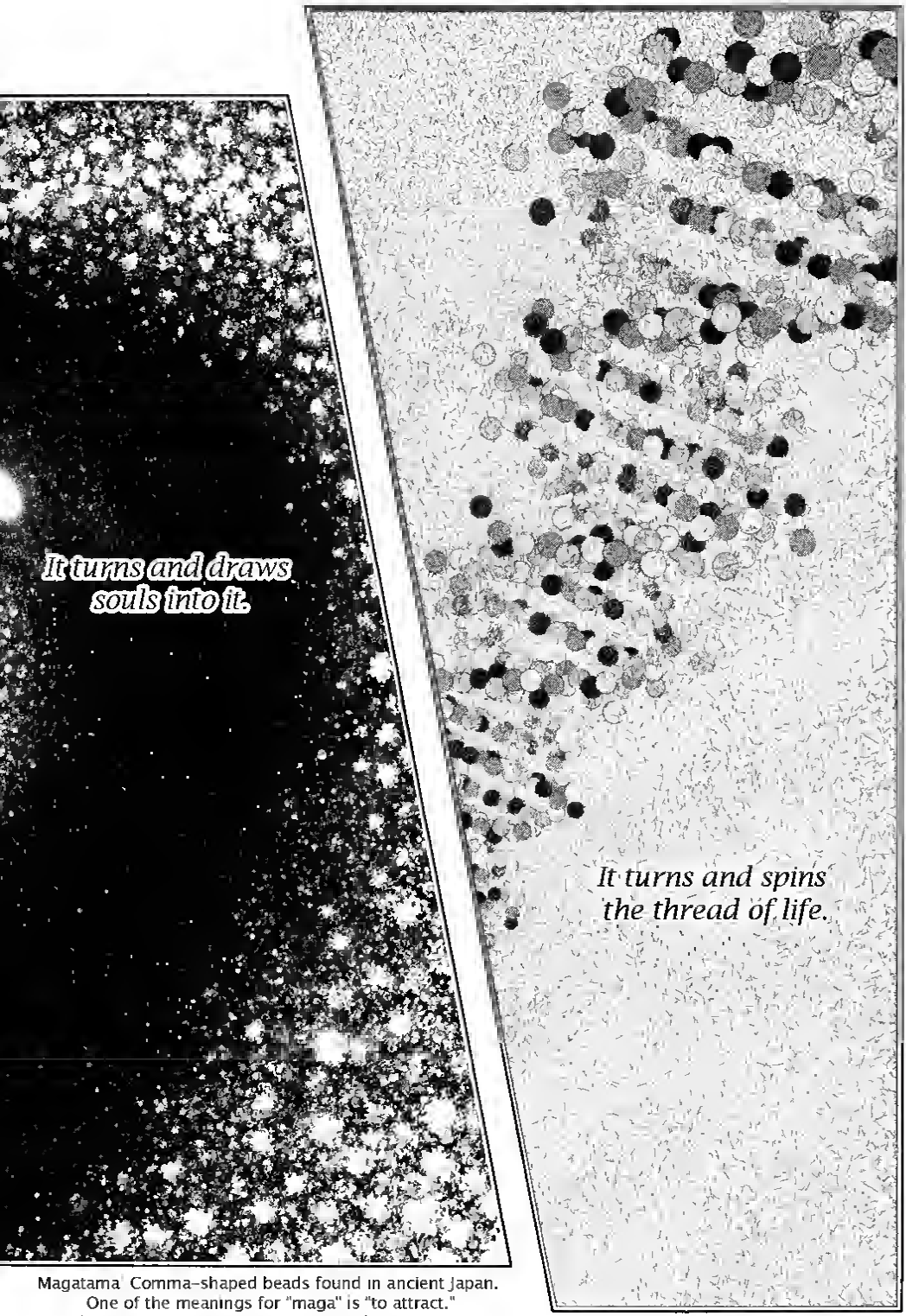



My hand...!
My body...!
Ah...!
Ah...!

٦
٣

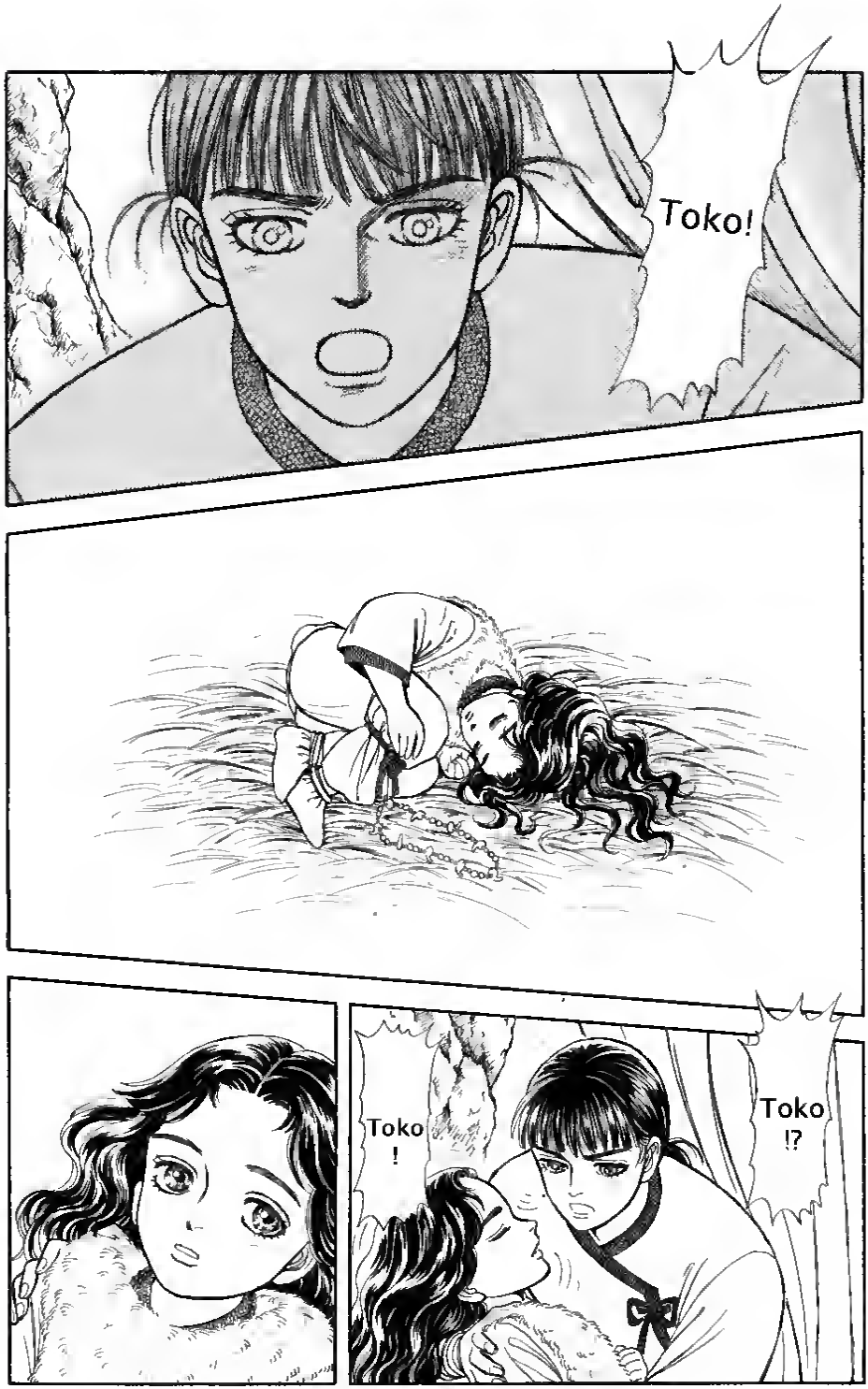
This comma-like shape.

The shape
of beginnings.



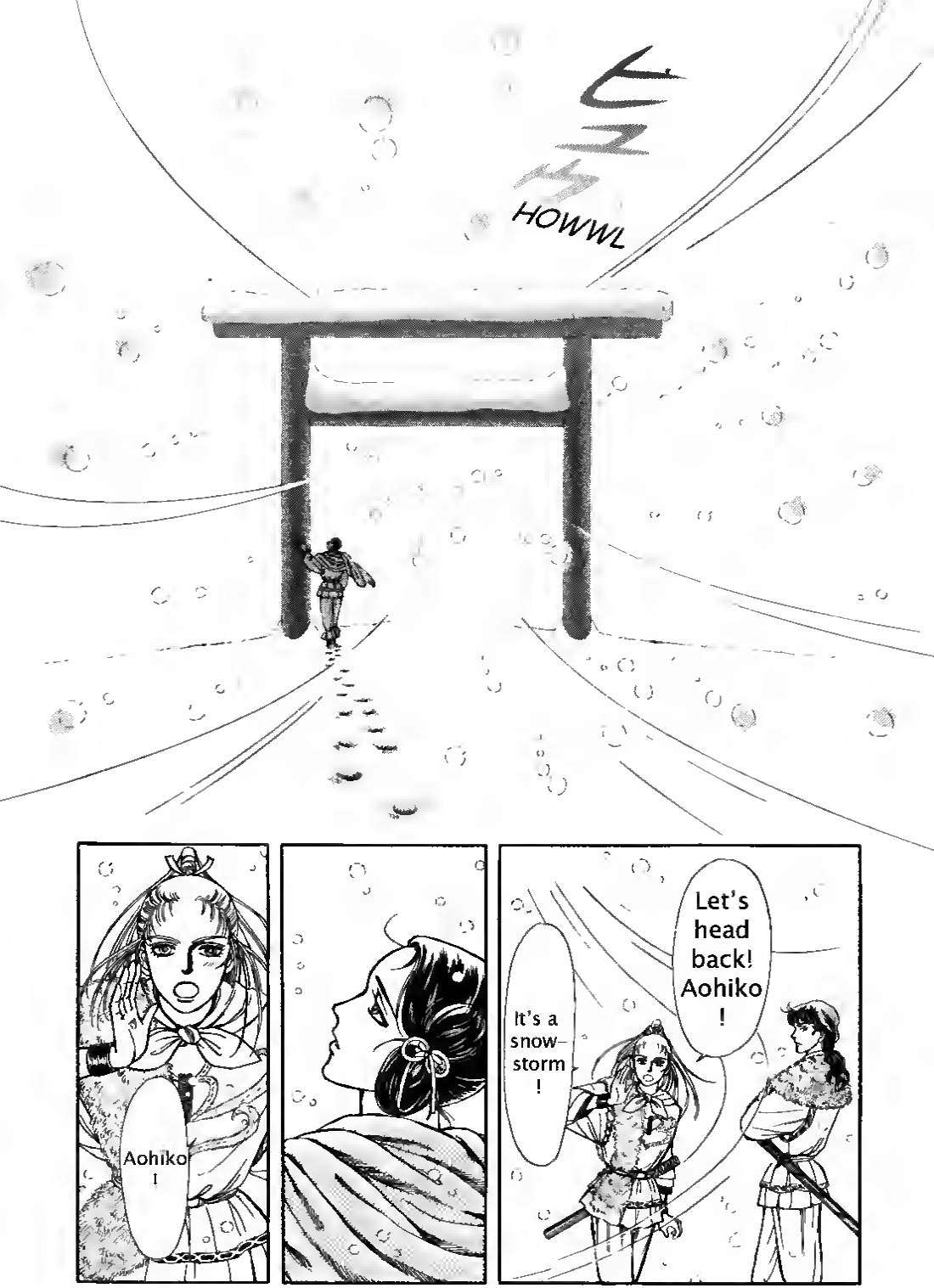
Magatama: Comma-shaped beads found in ancient Japan.
One of the meanings for "maga" is "to attract."
"Tama" (jade) is associated with "Tamashii" (souls) and spirits.

Turning and turning- the primordial universe.


Toko!
Toko
!
Toko
!?

Toko ...!?
The power of the bead neck-lace ...
...has retur-ned.

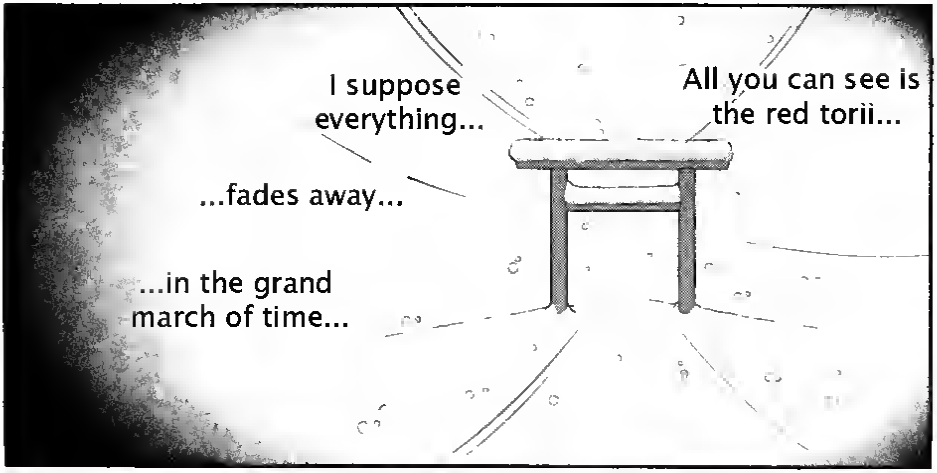
I went far away.
Huh!?
Hey... You half asleep ?
... far, faaar away ...
To a place ...
Toko !?
But I like it here ...
I'm... slee... py...
Toko ...
I like this... the best...


HOWWL

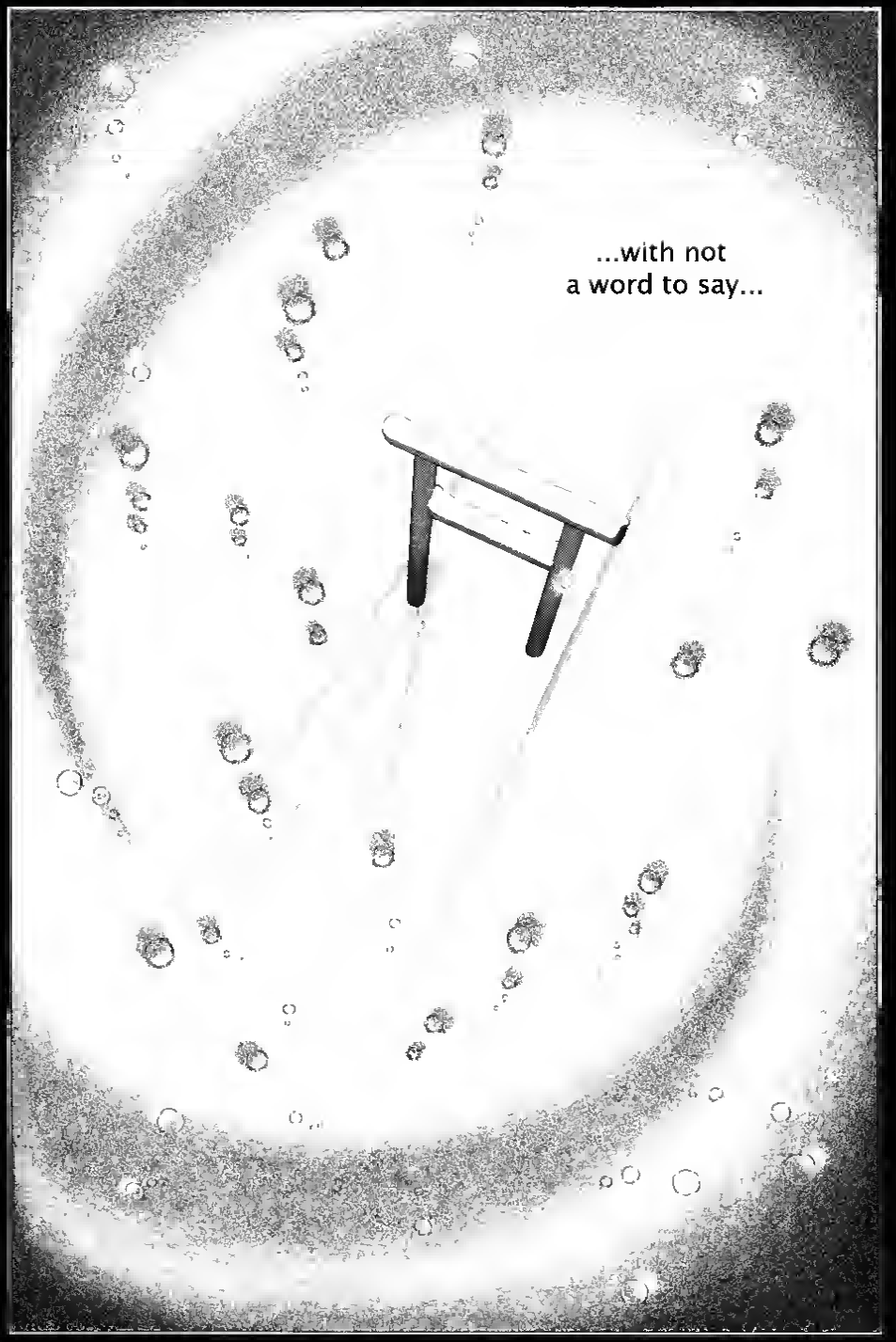
Aohiko !
It's a snow-storm !
Let's head back! Aohiko !

Leave him be!
You think so?
He'll wake up from his sentimental reverie as soon as he sneezes.
He's the kind of guy that would stand there until he was buried in snow if left alone.
THUMP
WHAP
You heading back already, Katsu-ra!?
はっはっは
HA-HAA
Yes! We've got to. It's turning into a snowstorm.
You're ...
... heading back already ...?

All you can see is the red torii...
Everything else is underthe snow...

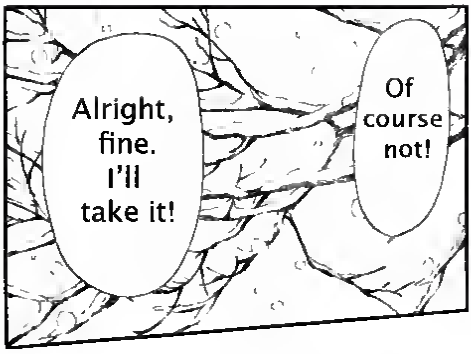

I suppose everything...
All you can see is the red torii...
...fades away...
...in the grand march of time...

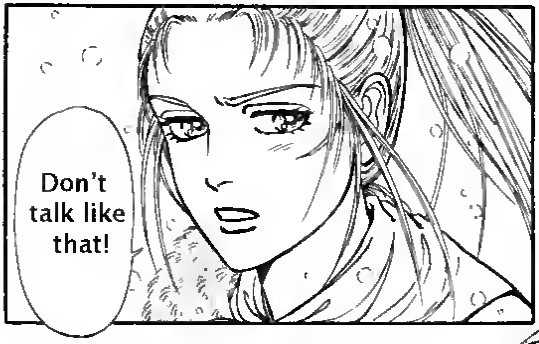
Only the red torii remains...


...with not
a word to say...

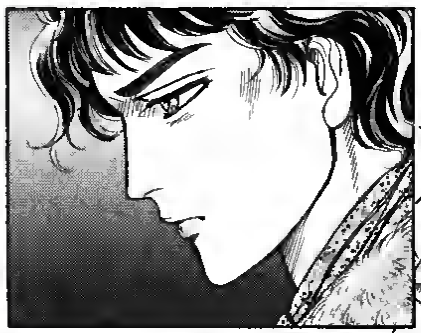
A comb?
What is it?
I forgot to give this to you.
Katsura
It's made from katsura wood, so it must be destiny.
It's beautiful craftsmanship.
Please use it for yourself.
I made it for Takaya, but he doesn't like doing his hair.
You making fun of me?
...and it smells good.
Katsura wood is supple and easy to work ...

You're likely to get yourself killed soon...
...so I can use it as a memento.


Of course not!
Alright, fine. I'll take it!


Don't talk like that!

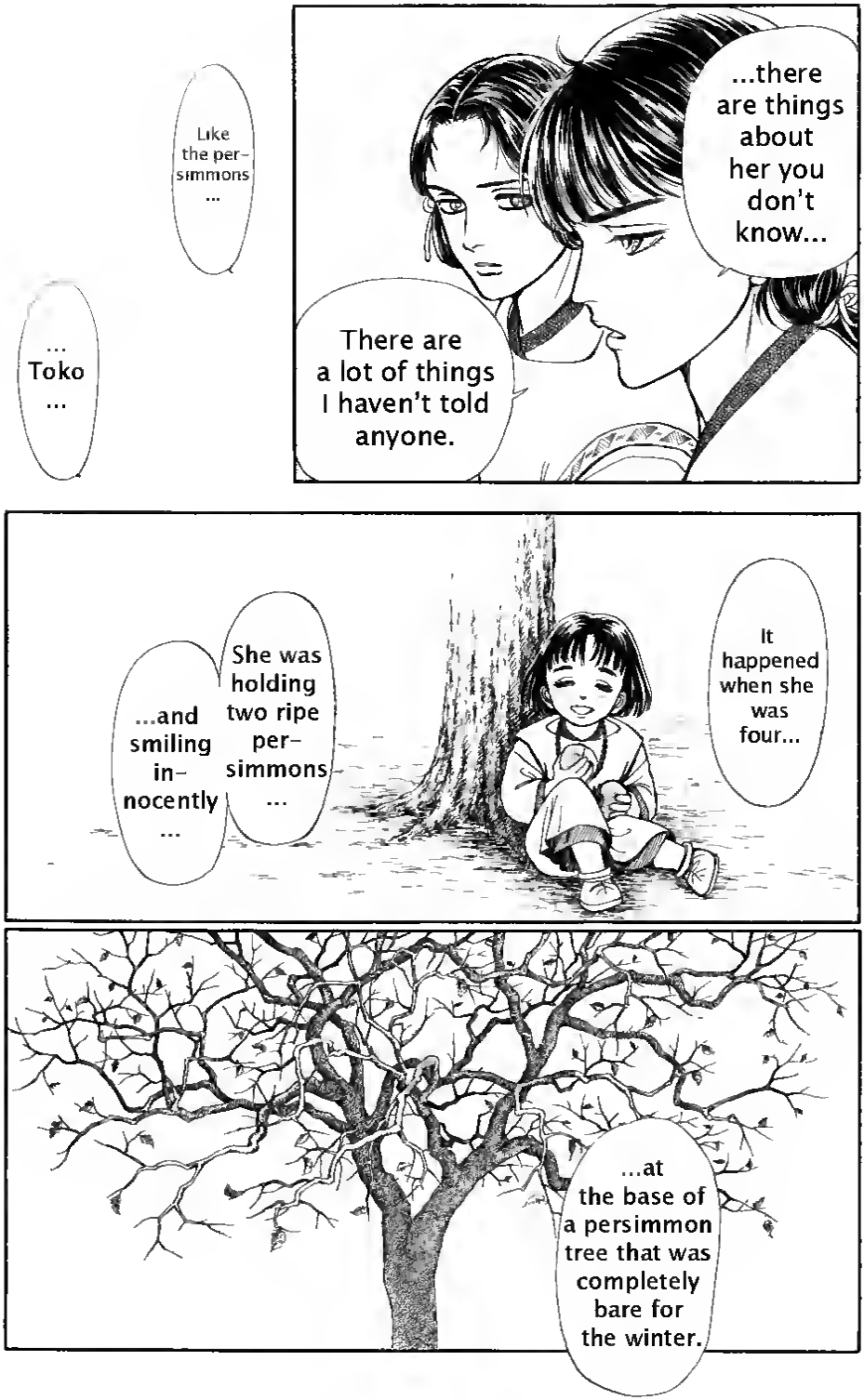
Yeah... but...
You said it yourself.



Sounds good...

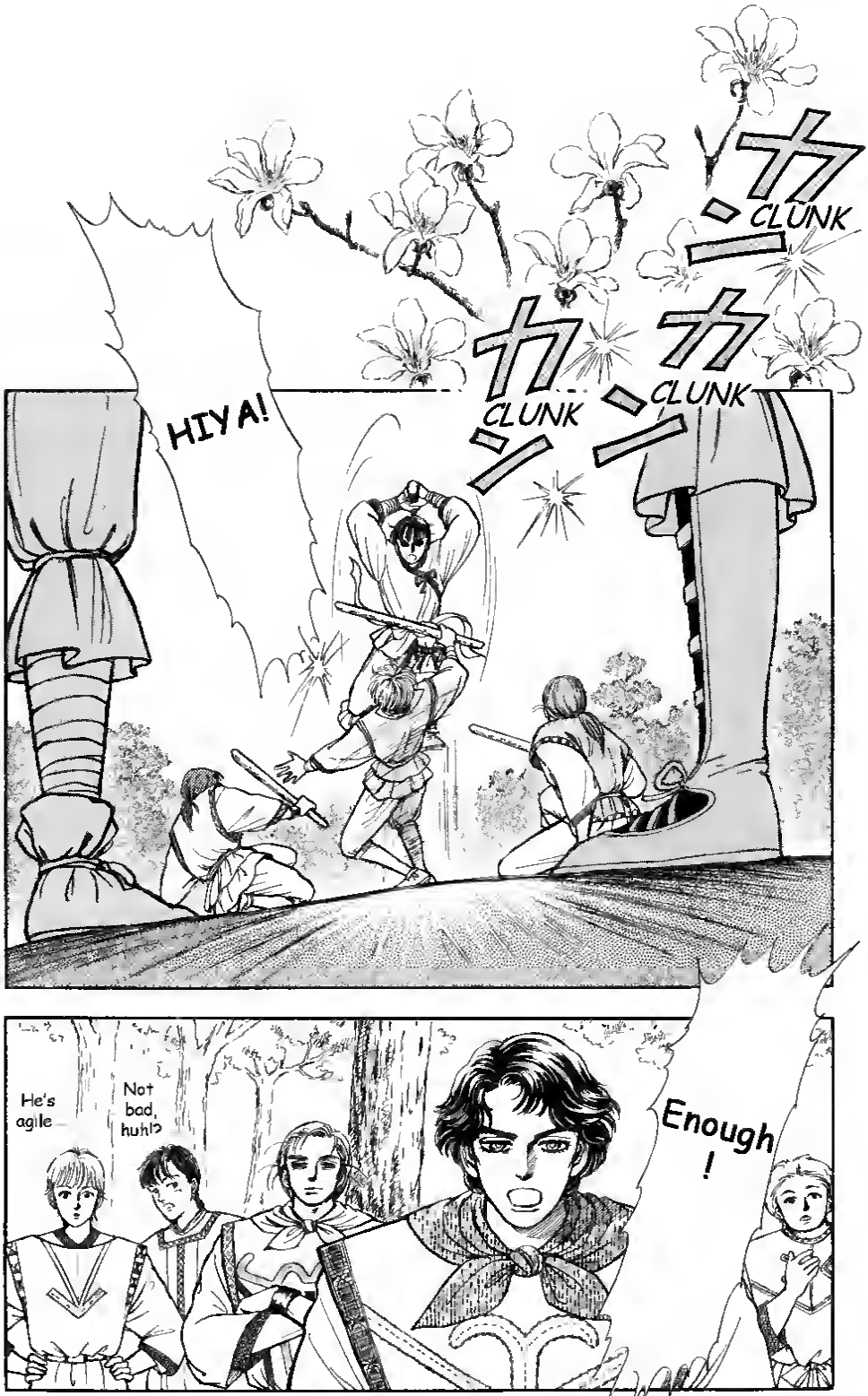
You're right ...
The power of the bead necklace has returned.
That's not all...
She turned into a baby, then got even smaller...
...and then traveled to some place far away...
She says stuff like that from time to time as if half-awake and then falls asleep.
But there doesn't seem to be anything wrong with her...

So... Toko was in resonance with the bead necklace...?
It's said that a highly sensitive oracle develops resonance with whatever she touches and has a vision of the memories stored in it...
She's still young, so she can't explain things very well.
Pro-bably ...
I'm...
... worried ...
Always have been...
Toko's no ordinary child...
You know that,but ...

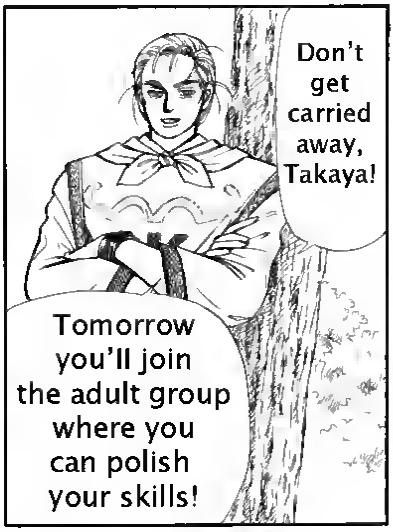

Like the per-simmons ...
...there are things about her you don't know...
... Toko ...
There are a lot of things I haven't told anyone.
It happened when she was four...
She was holding two ripe per-simmons ...
...and smiling in-nocently ...
...at the base of a persimmon tree that was completely bare for the winter.

They were beautiful persim-mons.
Not a single scratch ...
It kind of scared me...
And yet you're unaware of yourself...
I am just as worried about you ...
...as you are about Toko.
By spring, I'm going to be the best fighter in the youth group!
The Oracle told me many times...
"You must never teach Takaya the yin stone mantras"...

Just wait and see!
HAH
I'll improve my technique...
Idiot!
Why don't you join in..?
26
うんせ!!
Hup!
What're you lookin' at?
...and build up my body...
Hup!
うんせ!!
25 !!
24 !!
23 !!
...so I can protect Toko whenever we run into a demon-god warrior...
By the spring ...


カーン
CLUNK
カーン
CLUNK
カーン
CLUNK
HIYA!
He's agile...
Not bad, huh!?
Enough!

Follow Takaya's example and train harder!
That was sloppy. I'm disappointed in you three. What happened!?
Koma! Ino, Toji!
Train harder!
Follow my example !
How can we train like that idiot...!?
Yis-sir.
HEHE
Yes-sir.
Yus-sir.



Tomorrow I can spar with Ichirota!

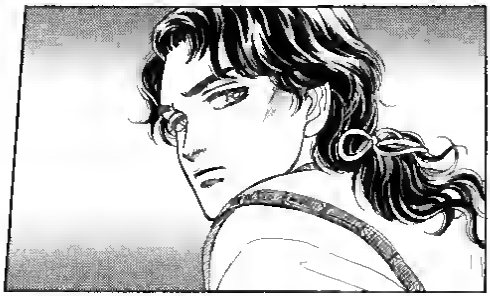
Yesss!

Is Katsura's team the only one that's traveling far today?
Yes. They're climbing the mountain to the north to survey the terrain for our departure.
Yes sir!
Sound the drums!
Lone demon god!?
Where to!?
Chief! Aohiko and Toko are also traveling pretty far today.
The wind is blowing from the south! Katsura's team should hear the drums.
I'll go look for them.
You don't know, do you?
I-I...

He said he didn't want anyone to hear the mantra he was going to teach Toko today... He didn't want anyone to see...
Toko! Where are you!?
DASH
Yes sir!
You all split up and help him look!
If anything happens, blow on your whistle!
If you can't find them in half an hour, come back here.
All right !?
Ichirota !

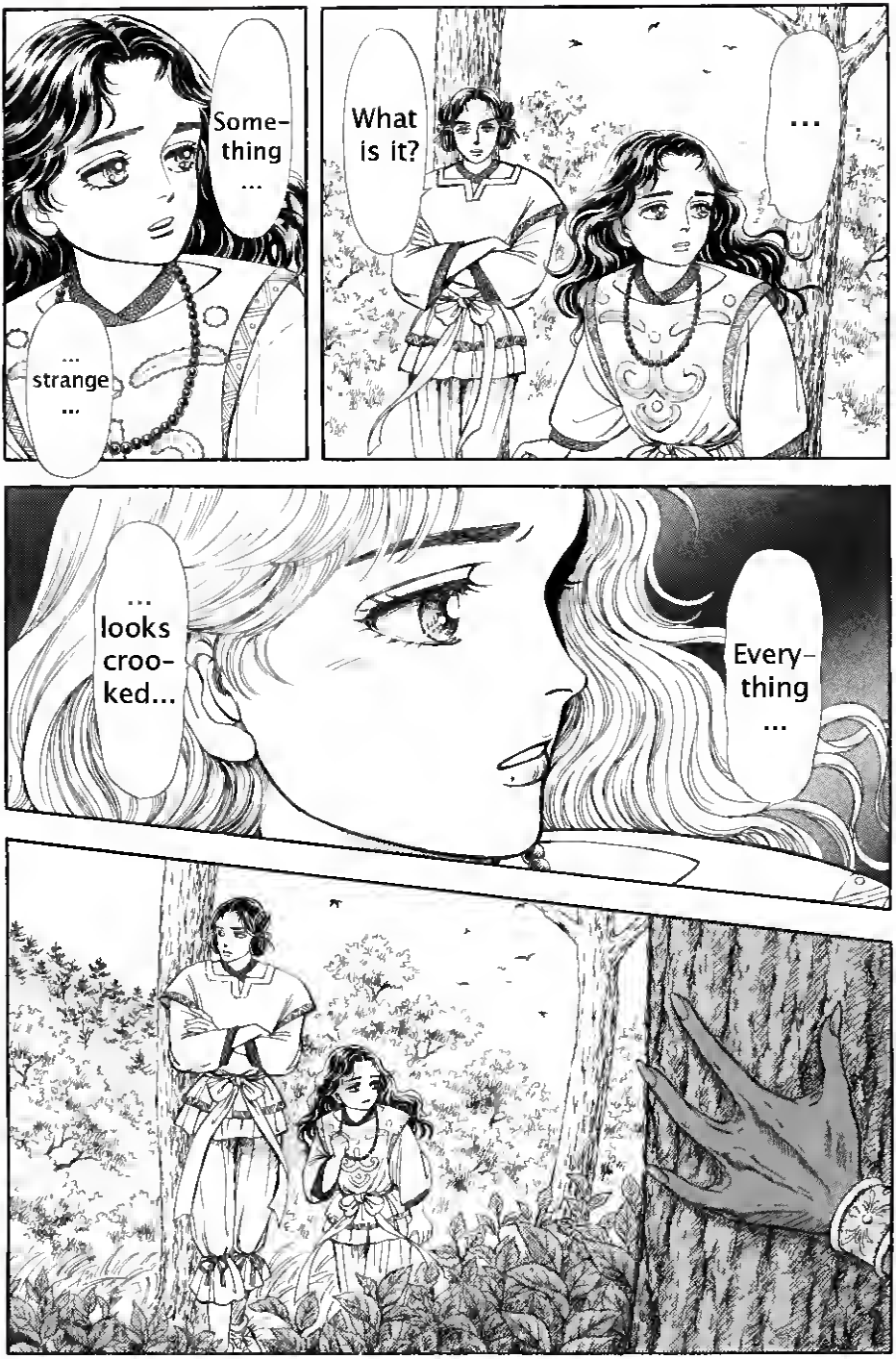
ホイロタスロの
Try again ...
The last sound was a little off.

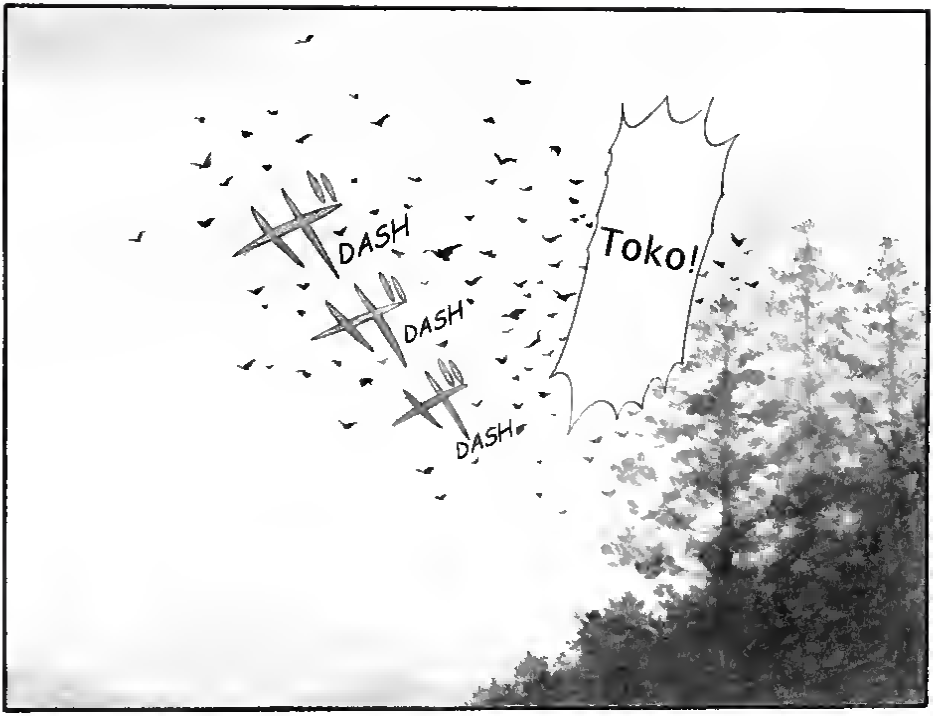
You ...



Never mind.
Go ahead !

Yes sir!


Some-
thing
...
... strange ...
What is it?
...
... looks croo-
ked...
Every-
thing
...


DASH
DASH
DASH
Toko!

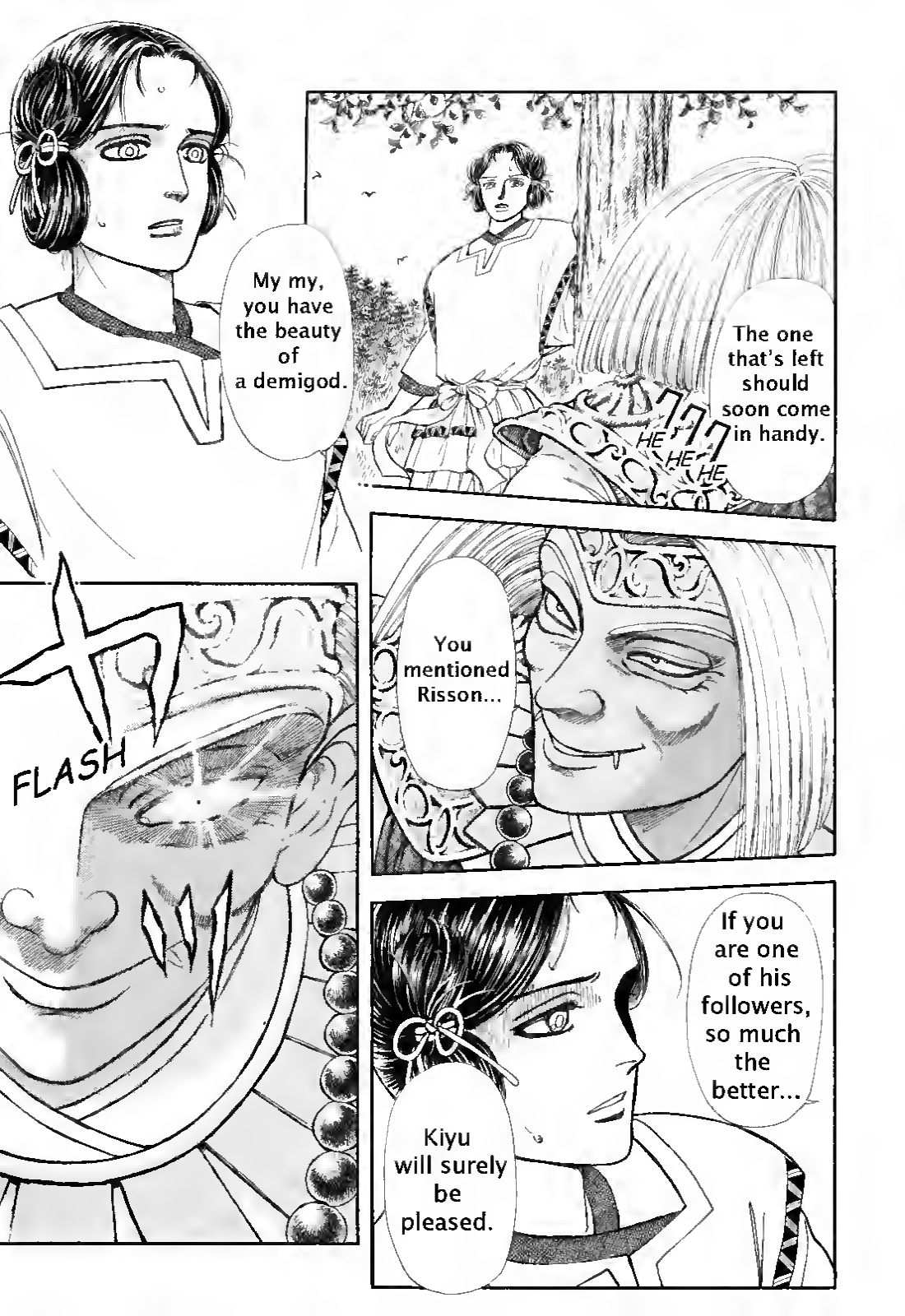
Toko will die...

Toko!
Aohiko!

HE
HE
HE
Look what I found.
GASP

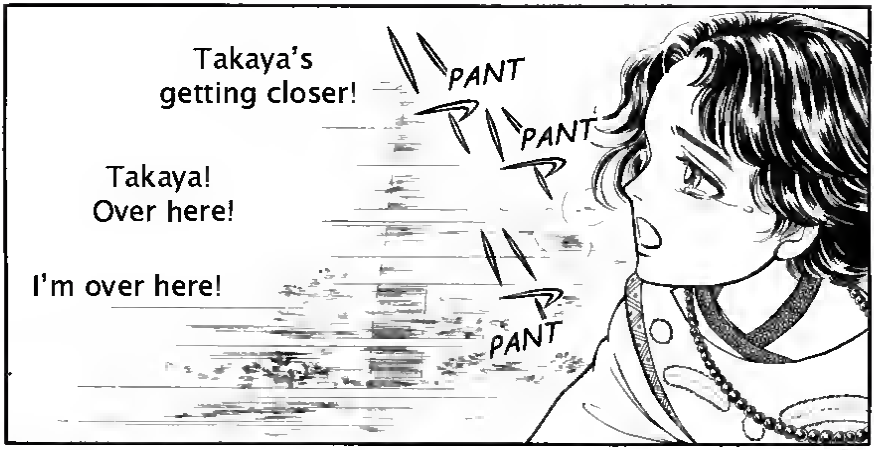
Ah...
A souvenir for Kiyu.
A lone demon god!

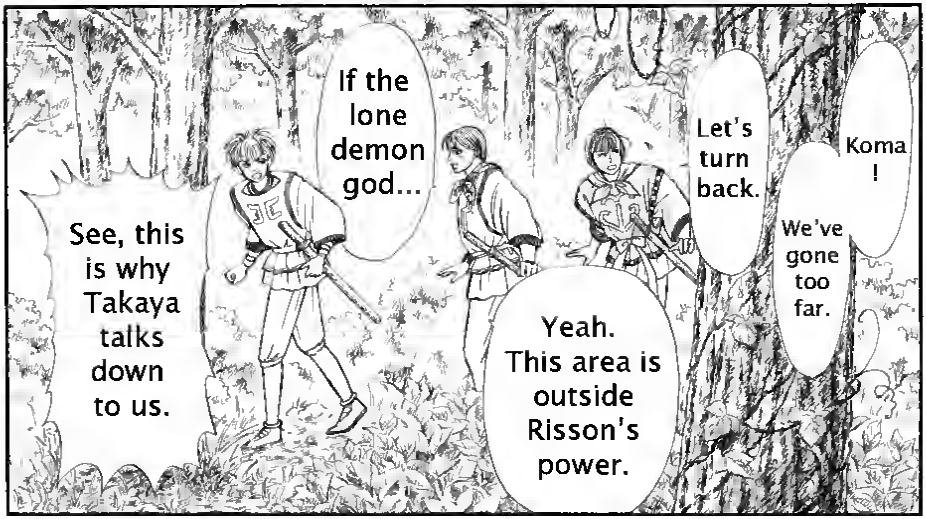
Run!
Get back inside Risson's shield.
A-Aohiko...
Help!
DASH
Takaya!
DASH
DASH
Help! Help!


My my, you have the beauty of a demigod.
The one that's left should soon come in handy.
HE HE HE
You mentioned Risson...
FLASH
If you are one of his followers, so much the better...
Kiyu will surely be pleased.

SLIP,
UNH

HMPH!
From this height ...
What a shame ...
Well, on to the child...!


Takaya's getting closer!
PANT
PANT
Takaya! Over here!
I'm over here!
PANT


If the lone demon god...
See, this is why Takaya talks down to us.
Yeah. This area is outside Risson's power.
Let's turn back.
Koma!
We've gone too far.

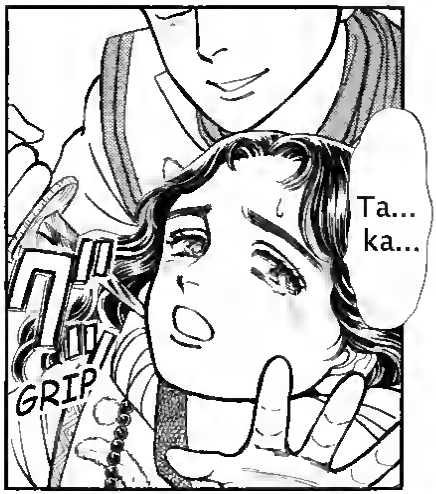
He'll stop talking like he's better than us!
If we find Toko and take her back before he does, we can turn things around.

PANT
PANT
PANT
PANT
It's Toko!
Hey! Some-one's coming!
Yeah but...!
It's not worth risking our lives...
See, I told you!
Over there!
Over there!
Did you confront the lone demon god!?
The whistle! Let's first alert everyone.
There, there.
I-I'm a fast runner, so...
Hurry and tell Risson...
A-Aohiko...

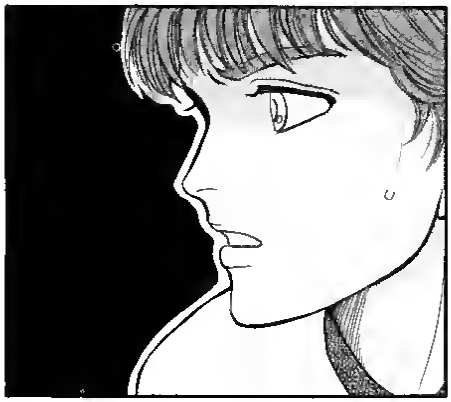
Whoa!
RUSH
Takaya
!
Ohhhhh.
That
scared
me.
WHEW
Toko's
safe!
Back
there
...
Aohiko
...

Stay back, Takaya!
Koma ?
Don't come any closer if you don't want your precious Toko to get hurt.
What're you doing... Koma...?
Wha...

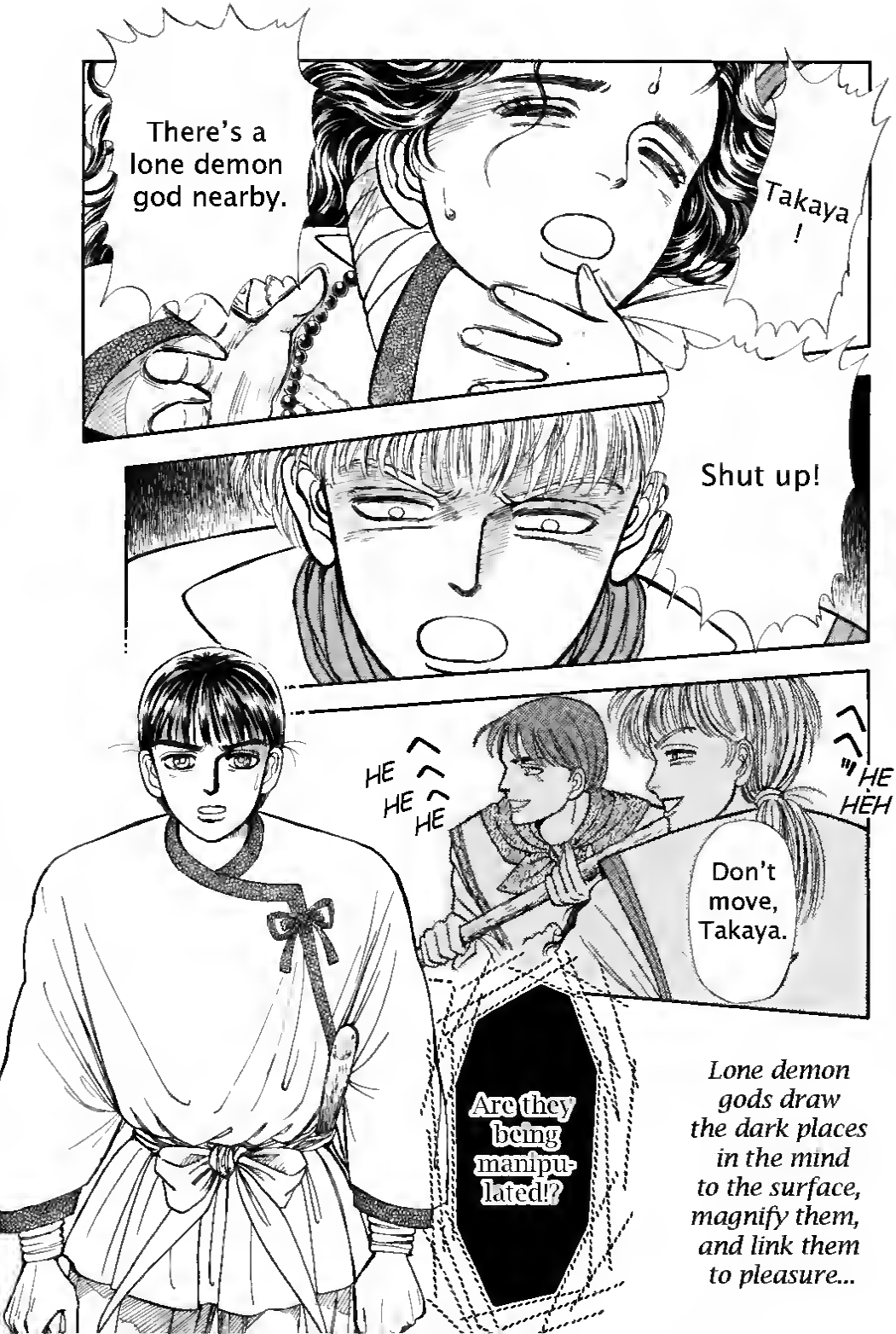
Heh ... I get it.
What's gotten into you!?


Ta... ka...
GRIP

Sure is.
Now's our chance to take him out...
Right ?

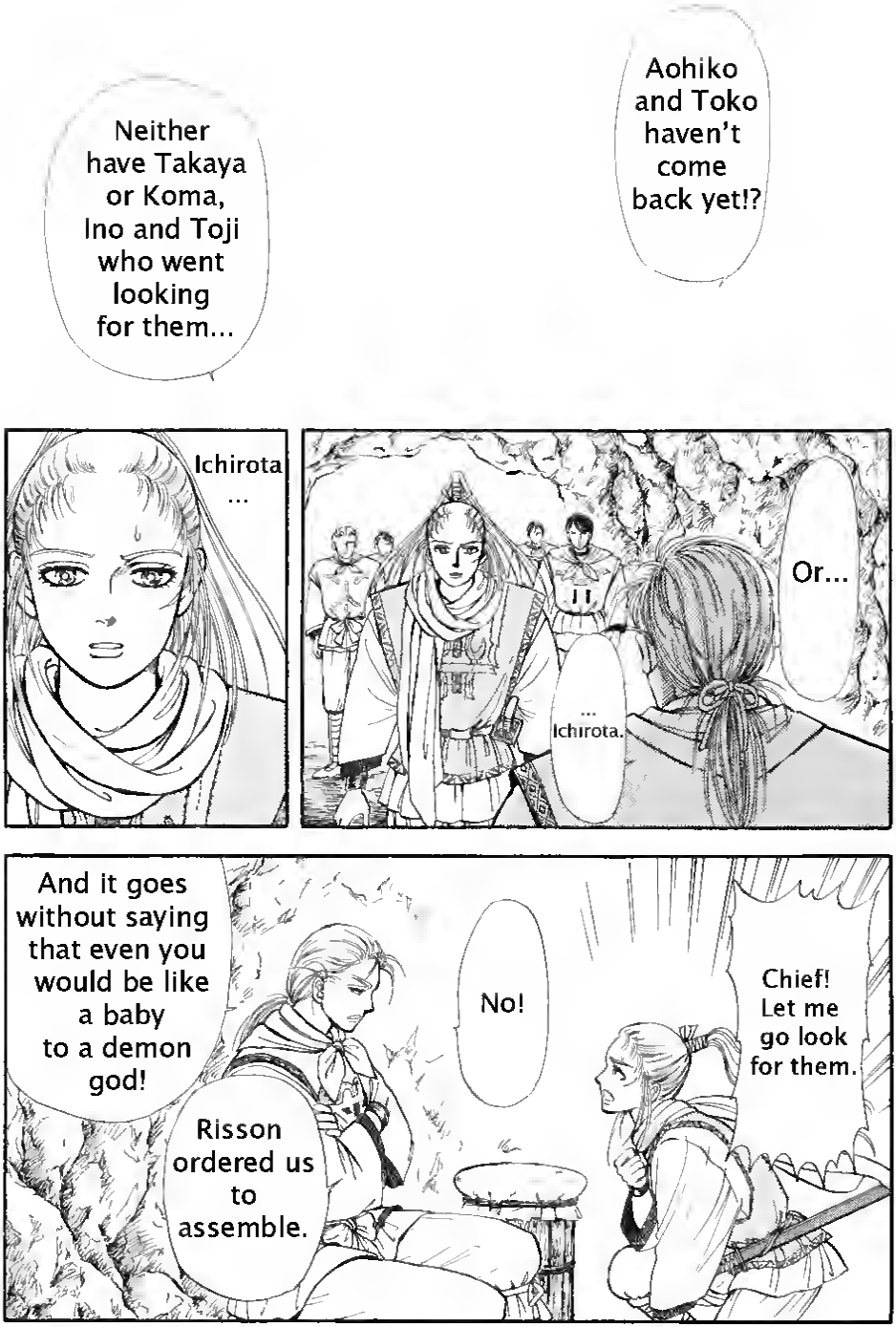


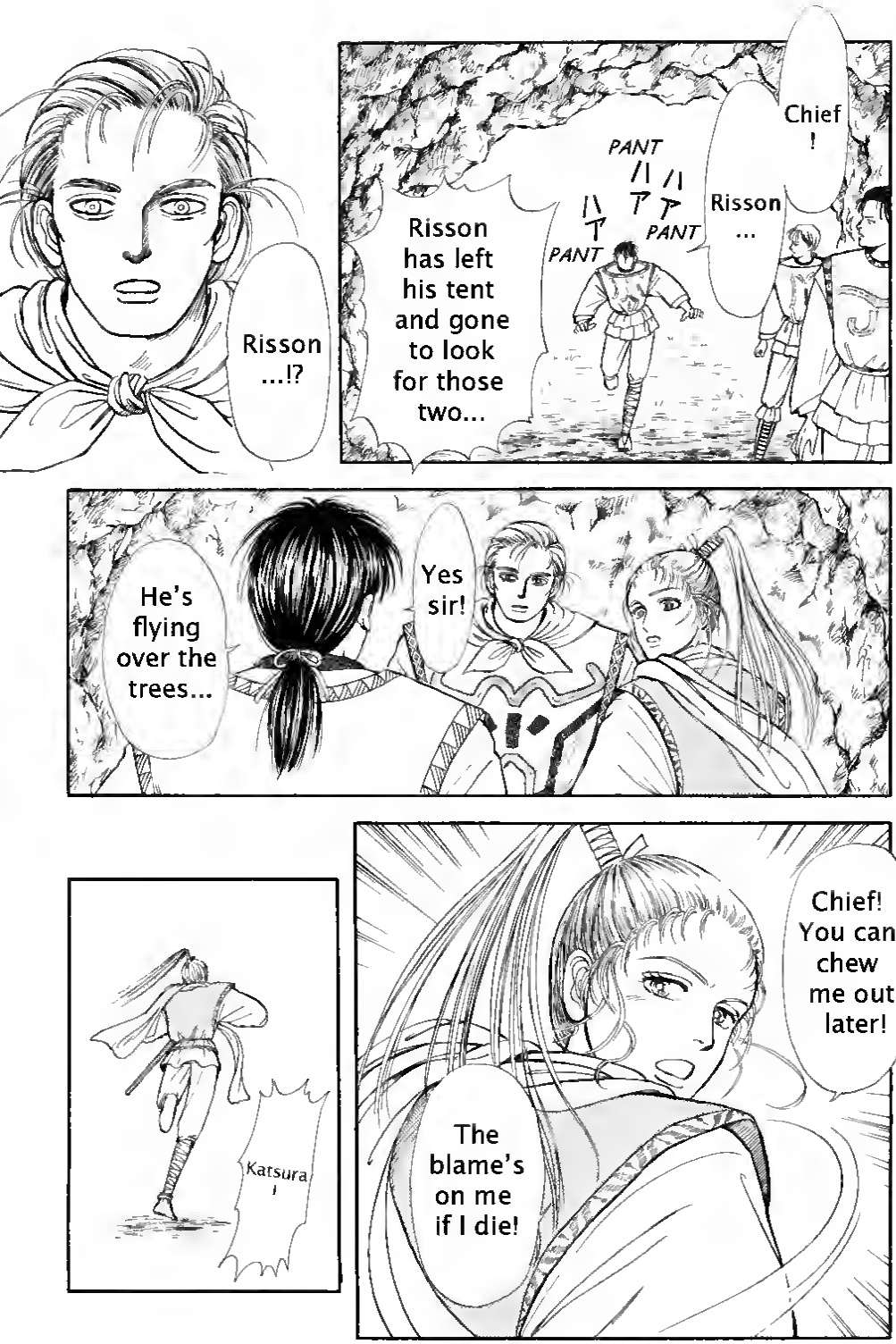
He beat the crap out of us.



Lone demon gods draw the dark places in the mind to the surface, magnify them, and link them to pleasure...

Let's get him.
Let's string him up !
String him up!
Get him!
Get him!
Get him!
HE
HE
HE
HE

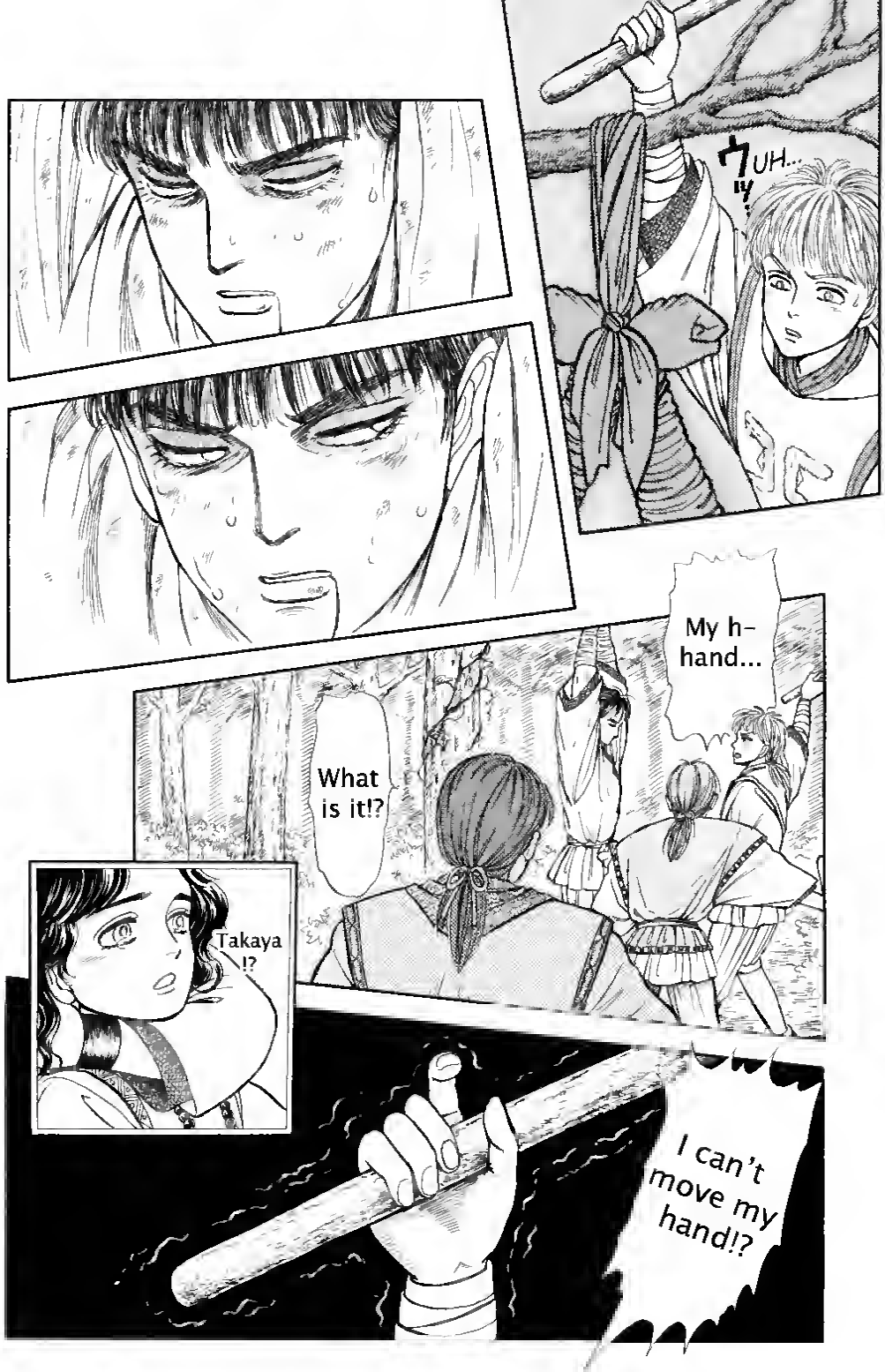

Aohiko and Toko haven't come back yet!?
Neither have Takaya or Koma, Ino and Toji who went looking for them...
Ichirota ...
Or...
...Ichirota.
Chief! Let me go look for them.
No!
Risson ordered us to assemble.
And it goes without saying that even you would be like a baby to a demon god!


Risson ...!?
Risson has left his tent and gone to look for those two...
PANT
PANT
PANT
Risson ...
Chief !
He's flying over the trees...
Yes sir!
Katsura !
The blame's on me if I die!
Chief! You can chew me out later!

WHACK
Takaya's going to die!
WHACK
STOP!
...and
30
29
!!
28
!!
THWAK

Koma! Take a crack at it before he expires!
Don't let Toko get away.
Risson!
THWAK
Risson!
THWAK
Risson!
WHACK

39 !!
THWAK
WHACK
40 !!
41 !!
42 !!
THWAK


ウ UH...
ッ!
My h-hand...
What is it!?
Takaya !?
I can't move my hand!?

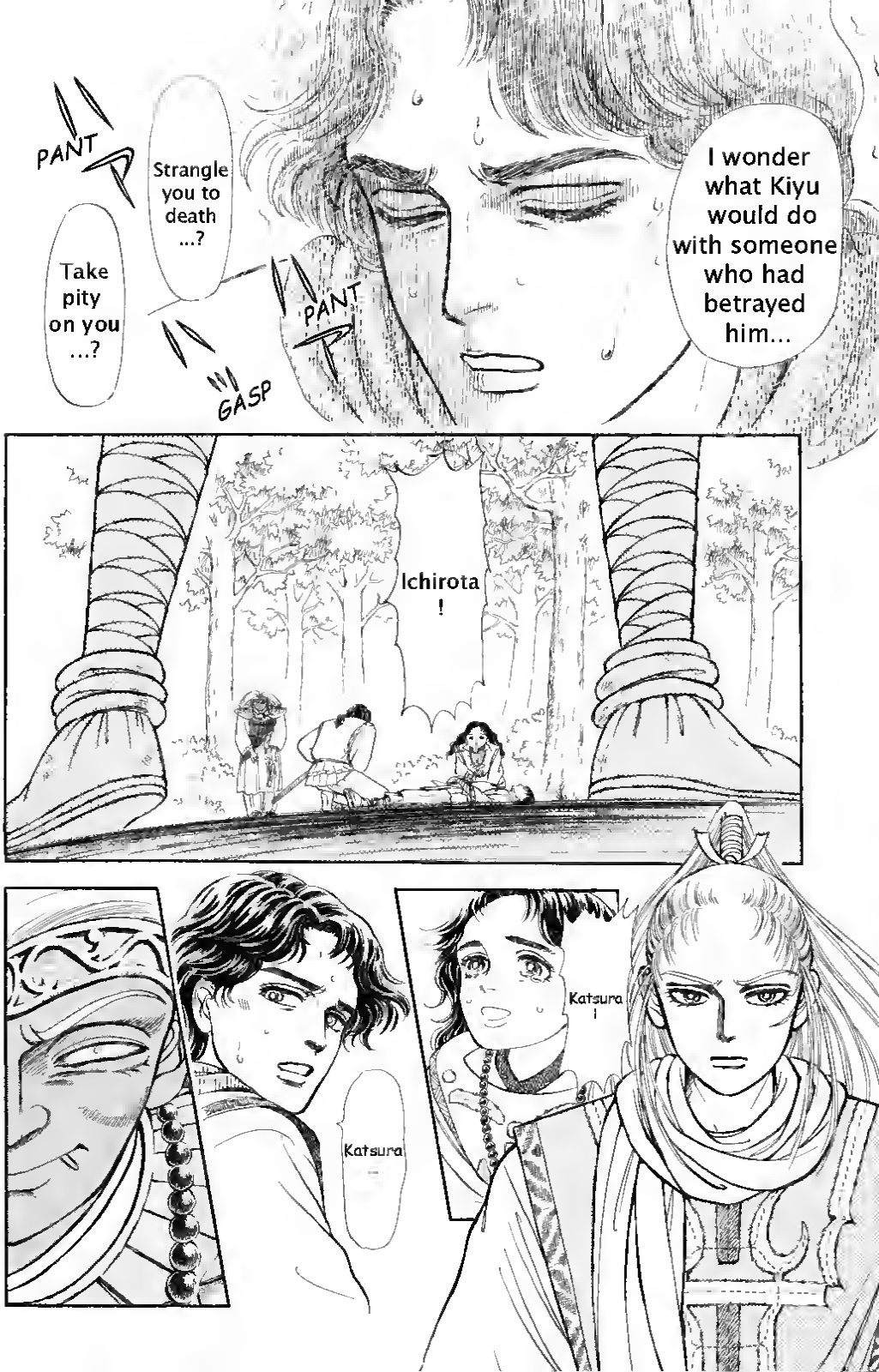
What're you doing!?
What on earth is going on!?
Ah ...
Ichirota ...

Ah
...
AHHH!
Good grief...
Ta... Takaya
THE THE THE

Oh.
It's...
...that one from long ago.
Nachi, right...?
I...
I'm... Ichirota ...

He was especially fond of you.
You caused quite a ruckus when you ran away from Kiyu.
Don't play innocent... You're going through some kind of inner turmoil.
Hehe he...
I'm a follower of the demigods !
Then again, why bother? Your heart already belongs to the demon gods...
Shall I draw it out as I did with those three children?

I'm...
Nachi !?
I...
Nachi ...
Doesn't it!?
You'll feel better.
Just admit it...
You looked happy.
You were more full of life when you were a follower of the demon gods.
You should come back to Kiyu and bring the child as a souvenir.
PANT
PANT
PANT


PANT
Strangle you to death ...?
Take pity on you ...?
PANT
GASP
I wonder what Kiyu would do with someone who had betrayed him...
Ichirota !
Katsura
Katsura

SWISH
Don't ...
... interrupt me!
Ichiro ...
Oh!

Ris...

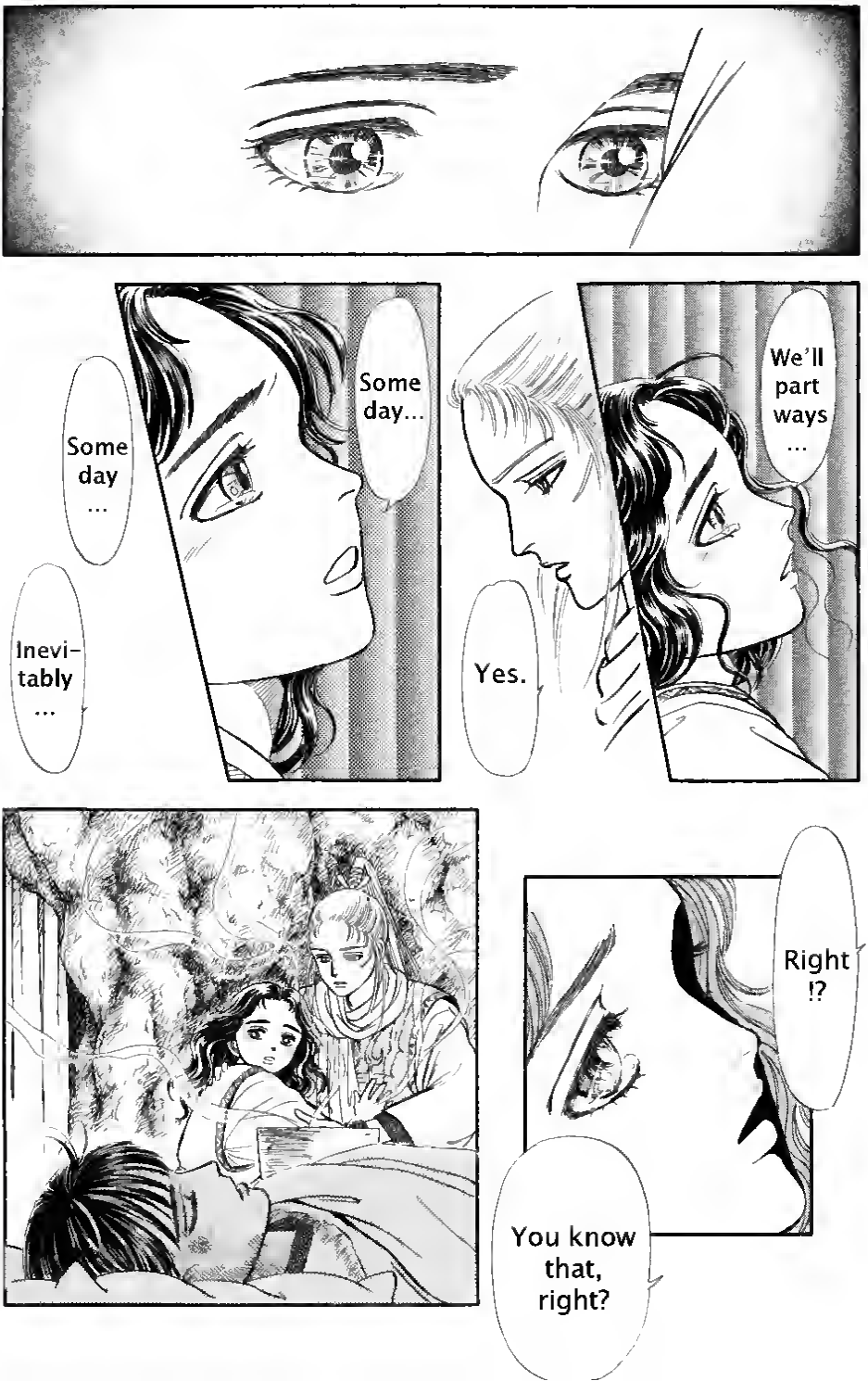
SHAA
Where's Aohiko ?
Your Holi-ness!

You take care of Takaya!
I'll look for him.
We saw the demon god over there, and I ran away.
I... I don't know.
Something must have happened to Aohiko too.
Koma and his friends were manipulated into doing this.
What ... happened ...!?
Takaya ...

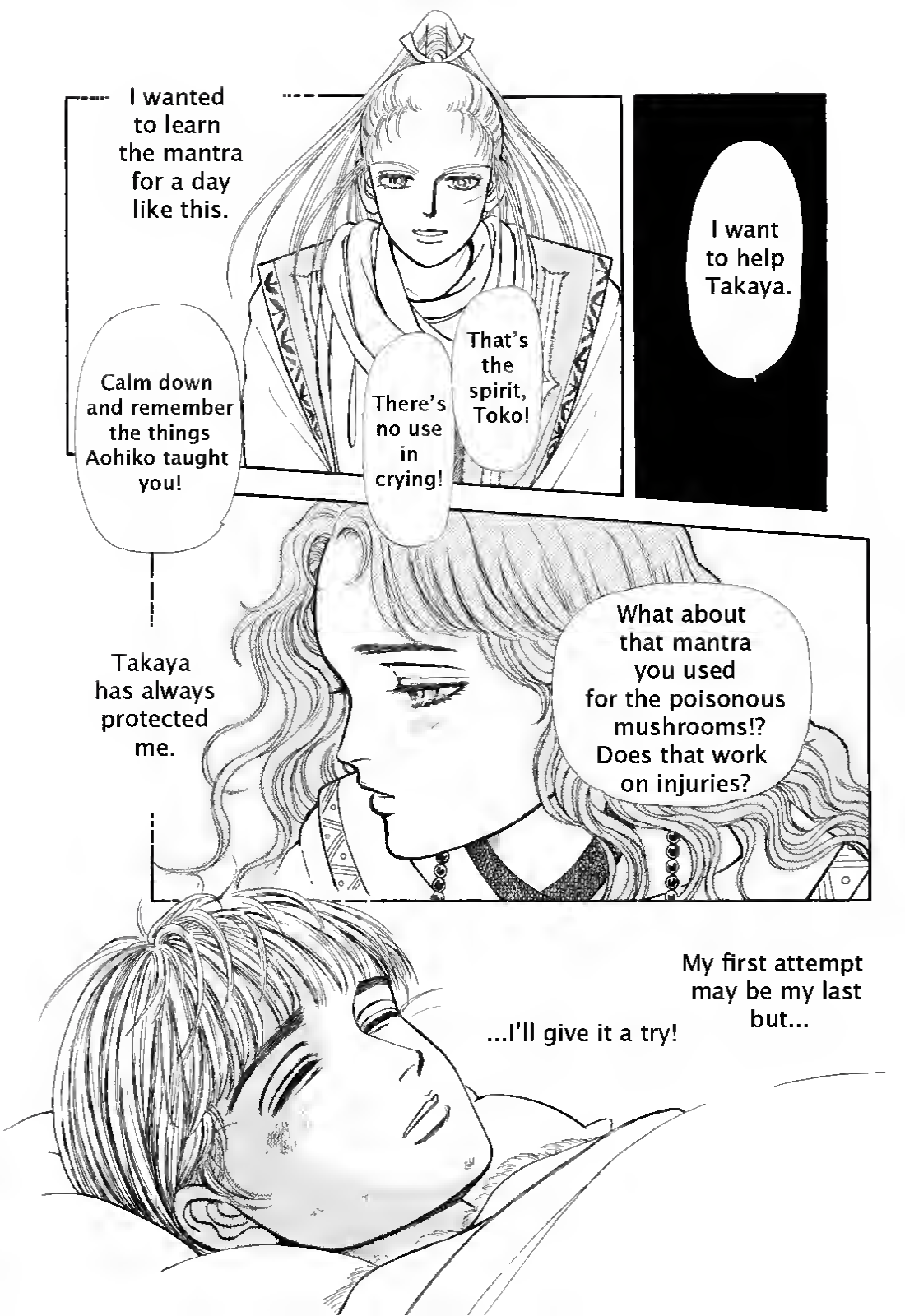
Aohiko...
Send out a search party at dawn. If we give up on them now, they will make a big mess of their lives.
They may be unable to show their faces out of fear at what they did...
Koma and the others may not come back.

Our go-to doctor, Aohiko, is still missing ...
His bones are broken in several places and his stomach is ruptured. That's all I can make of it...
I'm not sure he'll make it...
Barely breathing.
So ...
...how is Takaya?
We'll die together!
If Takaya dies, I'll dietoo!
We'll die together!

SOB
SOB
SOB
You're going to ruin your eyes if you keep crying like that.
What good is that going to do?
Calm down!
SOB
SOB
SOB
You're too attached to each other...
I get worried about you and Takaya.
... brother and sister ...
We're ...
Even if you don't want death to separate you...
Brothers and sisters must live apart some day.
Toko ...
But still ...


Some day...
Some day ...
Inevi-tably ...
We'll part ways ...
Yes.
Right !?
You know that, right?

Brother and sister...
...no more.


I wanted to learn the mantra for a day like this.
I want to help Takaya.
That's the spirit, Toko!
There's no use in crying!
Calm down and remember the things Aohiko taught you!
Takaya has always protected me.
What about that mantra you used for the poisonous mushrooms!? Does that work on injuries?
My first attempt may be my last but...
...I'll give it a try!

Aohiko said they have disinfectant properties.
Hinoki?
Could you collect lots of branches of hinoki leaves and spread the leaves all over the cave?
Katsura !
Roger !
Don't let anyone come near when I start themantra.
Okay, got it!
Any-thing else?
...but you must be really careful about how you use it.
I taught you this mantra today because you insisted...

The mantra you learned by ear is enough for most sick people. It can be substituted for this one if a lot of people chant it...
This mantra restores the life force of a person who is dying...
...but to do so, it simply transfers the life force of the person chanting it to the dying person.
Do you understand...?
It will gradually drain your life force.
...If you make one misstep, you could both die.

Takaya...
All of it...
I'll give you my life force...
If that still isn't enough...
If it simply won't work...
...we'll climb the mountains together ...
... up into the sky ...

It would be better than parting ways some day...

Your...
Holiness
...

UNH...
Don't worry. I got rid of the demon god.
Was it because of the mantra you were teaching Toko today?
Why did you go outside the shield?
...way... with plants...
...a myster ...ious ...
Toko has ...

That kind?
...was that... kind of mant -ra...
Today ...
The mantra... I taught her... today...
That's enough ...
COUGH
ゴホ
The kind that... speeds up the growth... of plants ...
And you didn't want anyone to see...
So you were thinking something would happen when Toko's power was combined with the mantra.

Please ...
... take care of her ... and Taka-ya.
She's safe.
How is Toko ?
I can't let you die...
We need you.
I...
... can't ...

...
Aohiko
...
You better not leave me that comb... as a memento...

Toko !
Katsura ...
The mantra's stopped.
Toko!
Look!
The color of Takaya's face...
Toko!
Toko!

To be continued...

Itihasa 2

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